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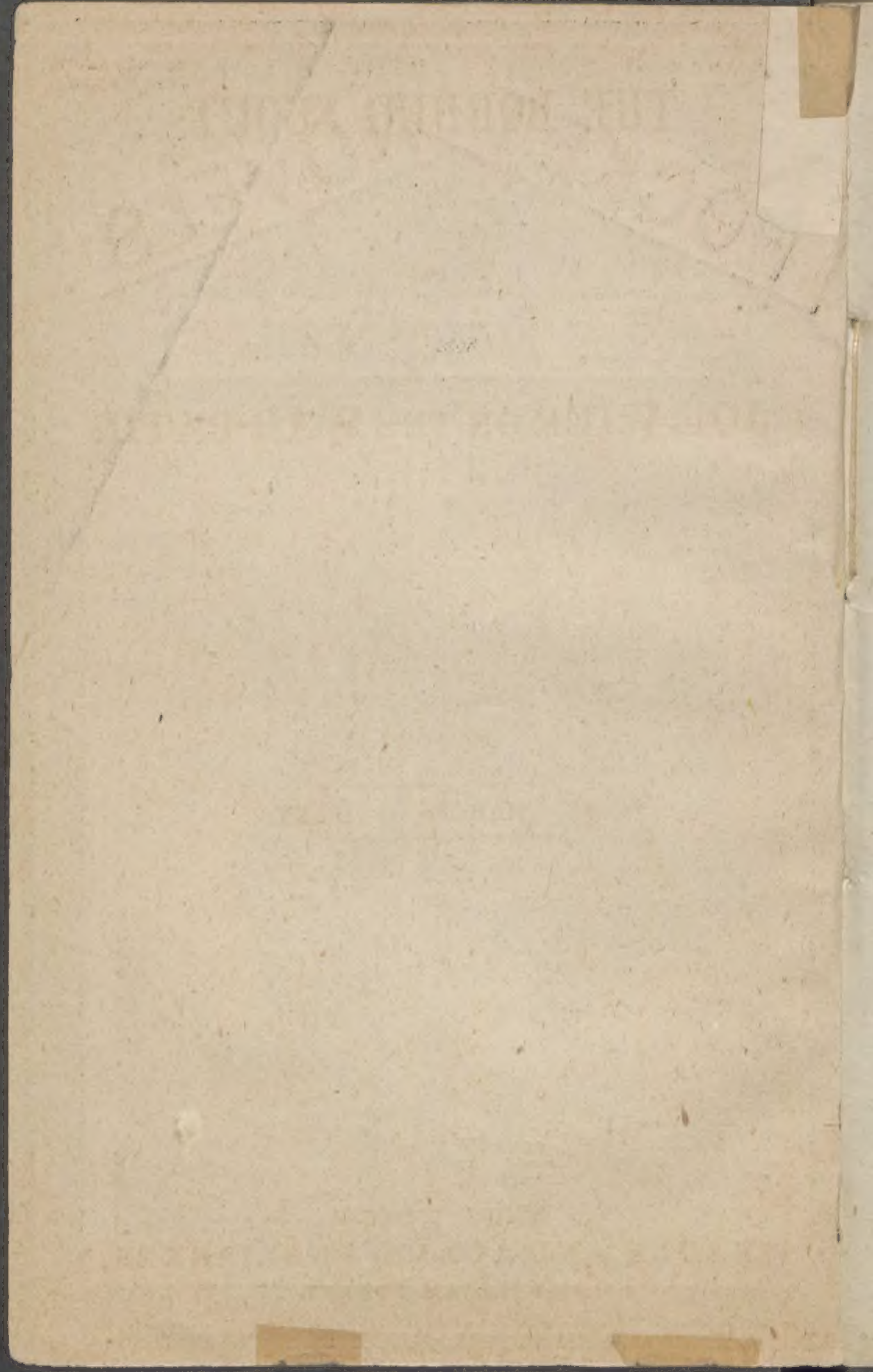
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POCKET NOVELS



The Border Scout. 164





THE BORDER SCOUT:

OR,

JOE WIER ON THE WAR-PATH.

BY CHARLES P. ISLEY.

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THE BORDER SCOUT.

CHAPTER I

“Why flames the far summit?”—CAMPBELL.

The month of October, to us of the North, where the scene of our story is laid, is one of the most delightful in the calendar. Then nature is robed in her most magnificent attire. He who has never seen a New England forest after the first frosts have touched it, has yet to behold one of the most gorgeous spectacles the eye ever rested upon. Suddenly, as if by magic, the green woods undergo a wonderful change. The different trees, with the manifold varieties of the same species, each assume a distinct livery, embracing every hue, from the rich scarlet and crimson of the oak to the pale gold of the rock maple. Words are inadequate to describe the pomp of this unrivalled display, nor is it in the power of the pencil to portray it. No palette could produce such a combination of colors, such delicate mingling of tints—such brilliant contrasts; all combined so harmoniously, and producing such a perfect whole, that the eye never wearies with gazing upon it.

We know of but one spectacle here at the North that can compare with it. It is after one of those warm rains which we frequently have in the depth of

winter, followed by a clear, cold night. The next morning you go abroad and a miracle of beauty meets your eye. Everywhere you see the trees bending gracefully to the earth, borne down with their fruitage of gems, flashing and sparkling with dazzling splendor as the sunbeams fall upon them, while every object, from the tall spire to the minutest shrub, is cased in crystal armor. There is yet one more spectacle not so gorgeous, perhaps, but "beautiful exceedingly." It is when a day of mist is succeeded by a cool night. The congealed vapor settles on every limb and twig and blade of grass, so that every object, all its outlines distinct, seems delicately embossed with silver, rivalling the most cunning workmanship.

But to our story.

We wish the reader to step back with us about one century—say to the year 1754, and permit us to introduce him into the wilds of the then District, but now State of Maine. It is in this same month of October. The delicious "Indian summer" had arrived, and the woods were flushed with the hectic of the dying year. On the banks of a picturesque stream, broken by innumerable falls, a small clearing had been made in the wilderness, and a settlement commenced, consisting of a few log huts and a small meeting-house, built also of logs. In the rear of the settlement, on a slightly rising ground, stood a block-house, as it was called. This house, or fort, was built of heavy timber, and was surrounded by a high palisade. It was used in those troublous times as a place of refuge, when fearing an attack by the Indians, and frequently the inhabitants of the early settlements were shut up for years in these close quarters, seldom venturing out, and and then only in squads, well armed, to attend to their

husbandry, or to bring down a passing moose or other wild game.

At the time of our story, although there were rumors rife of attacks having been made by the savages on neighboring townships, the inhabitants of this "grant"—one of the Narragansett townships—still remained in their homes, busy in securing their crops, and in preparation for the approaching winter. Day after day, as rumor followed rumor, many an anxious thought was cast upon the block-house, and eager consultations were held in regard to the expediency of removing thither. Already large quantities of provisions had been deposited there, and some of the families had made their arrangements to take up their abode there at a moment's warning.

The houses of the settlers were somewhat scattered, standing from a quarter to half a mile apart. A little off from the rest, on a little by-road or path, near the banks of the river, stood the house of a man by the name of Holden. His family consisted of himself and wife, a son some twenty years of age, a daughter a year or two younger, and a niece, an orphan, the child of a deceased sister, of about the same age. At times, and at this particular time, there was also a "hired man" to assist in harvesting.

It must be borne in mind, however, that, although receiving the wages of servitude, it was not the least detraction to the character of Frederick Hancock. It was common in those days for the sons of substantial farmers, and he was one of them, to let themselves out during harvest time. Hancock was about the age of George Holden, between whom a strong friendship existed. They were co-laborers in the field, and both shared the same bed. He was also a general favorite

in the family, and a particular one, if signs are to be relied upon, of Ellen Holden. Not that she openly displayed her partiality—she had too much true womanly delicacy to do that—but

“There is a language by the virgin made,
Not read, but felt—not uttered, but betrayed.”

Although born and reared in the wilderness, there was nothing coarse or hoydenish about Ellen Holden. She was a fine specimen of a country lass—buxom, full of life and spirit, ready to assist in every household duty; and in the haying season, more smart and dexterous with the rake than the majority of young men. She had naturally a fine mind, which she had not neglected. Her means of improving her intellectual powers were limited, it is true, but she was one of those characters who acquire knowledge intuitively, as it were. However, a select, though small collection of books in the possession of her father, aided materially her mental development.

Young Hancock's character bore some resemblance to Ellen's; and perhaps it was their mutual thirst for knowledge, and their mutual studies to attain it, that biassed their hearts towards each other. Be that as it may, it did not require a very close scrutiny to detect a strong, growing attachment between this couple, so eminently fitted by character and position for each other. Whether their affection was suspected by others, was a matter of uncertainty, as nothing appeared, by word or look, to indicate suspicion. A circumstance, however, very soon transpired, which revealed the deep interest which Hancock, at least, felt for his fair companion. And that same

thrilling incident, which we propose presently to relate, gave an insight of the secret of other hearts. George Holden and his cousin, Annie Wilson, followed closely in the footsteps of Frederic and Ellen. Being cousins, there had always been, as was natural, an open show of affection between them, and a familiarity of conduct, but it was not dreamed that any warmer feeling existed than a "cousinly regard"—a sentiment by no means easily defined.

Annie Wilson was like, and yet unlike, Ellen. In many characteristics there was a marked resemblance. She evinced the same aptness for study, and possessed the same household virtues. Her spirits were not so uniformly even and exuberant as were Ellen's. At times a shade of melancholy would veil her usually lively features. The loss of her parents had thrown a shadow over her early life, and although she had found an affectionate father and mother in her uncle and aunt, a warm-hearted sister in Ellen, and something more than a devoted brother in George, still, at times, a feeling of loneliness—a yearning for something they could not bestow—would steal over, not amounting to unhappiness, but sufficient to put a slight check on her naturally excitable spirits. In person she was more delicately moulded than her cousin. Although she enjoyed excellent health, it was not so robust as Ellen's. She possessed no small share of beauty, and she betrayed a natural grace in all her movements. It would be difficult to decide which of the two cousins bore the palm. There was a witchery in the laughing eyes and changeable features of Ellen, which fully balanced the more quiet charms of Annie. They were both lovely girls, and as loveable as lovely.

George Holden was a fine, manly fellow, sharing fully in his sister's lively disposition. He was more impulsive than his friend Hancock, and lacked, perhaps, a little of his firmness and decision of character. He loved a merry joke, and it did one good to hear his hearty, jovial laugh. The staidness of his father, who was a deacon in the church—and a deacon in those days was a very dignified body to be sure—was frequently severely tested by the good-natured pranks he was fond of playing. As for his mother, she doted on him as the apple of her eye, and was always ready to make excuses for him when his frolicsome propensities carried him beyond what the good deacon deemed strict propriety.

Such were the characters, hastily portrayed, and such the relation in which they stood toward each other, of the inmates of the small log-house we have mentioned.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCOUT.

The day was drawing to a close—the horn had been sounded with a lively tra-la-la by the rosy lips of Ellen Holden, calling the laborers from the distant field to the evening meal. Around the table the family had gathered, and the good deacon was about to ask a blessing on the plain and substantial food set before them, when footsteps were heard approaching the house. There was a pause, and the eyes of all were turned towards the door. It opened, and a tall figure, dressed in hunting gear, bearing a long

rifle, entered the room, followed by a powerful dog. A smile of recognition and welcome from the group around the table was given the new comer. He paused as he noticed the prayerful attitude of the family, and, lifting his cap, he leaned on his rifle, bowing reverentially as a signal for the deacon to proceed.

We will take the opportunity to describe him. He was above the middling height, even as he stood there in a bent posture. His chest was broad, and, though spare in flesh, his well-developed muscles evinced great strength and powers of endurance. He was apparently about sixty years of age. His face was bronzed by the sun and the weather, and scarred with age, but his eyes had lost none of the fire of youth. His features betrayed a remarkable vivacity when he entered the room, and returned the salutations of the family; but now in every lineament could be read a firm, unyielding resoluteness. Though there was a sternness, there was nothing like harshness or coldness in his countenance. It was one of those faces that indicate a bold, self-reliant man, full of shrewdness, and accustomed to depend upon his own resources in whatever circumstances he might be placed.

His dress was singular, being of a fashion half-civilized, half-savage. His cap was made of the skin of some wild animal, apparently that of a wolf, and was evidently the work of his own hands. He wore a short hunting-frock, girt about the waist by a broad belt of undressed hide, suspended from which was a sheath of the same material, containing a formidable hunting-knife. His lower limbs were encased in leg-

gins of deer-skin, and his feet in moccasins, like those usually worn by the Indians.

There was not the movement of a limb or a muscle, until the deacon had got through with his somewhat prolix blessing. That over, with a quick, active motion, the new-comer deposited his rifle in a corner of the room, his face lighted up as if by magic, and at one and the same time he was shaking hands with Mr. and Mrs. Holden, while the exclamations, "Welcome, Scout!" "Glad to see you, Scout!" "Take a seat at the table, Joe!" were uttered by different members of the family.

The personage thus introduced to the reader was a famous hunter at the time, and in the region of which we write. His name was Weir—Joseph Weir—although the soubriquet by which he was generally known was "The Scout." He was celebrated far and near, not only as a huntsman, but as a leader of expeditions sent out to punish the oft-repeated depredations of the savages, or to rescue the captives that had fallen into their hands. The greater part of his life had been passed in the woods, and he had acquired all the cunning and subtlety so characteristic of the aborigines. His eye was as quick to detect and follow a trail as the sharpest among the red men. His services were always ready when required to head a war-party against the common foe, and a great portion of his time was employed in following them up single-handed. He evidently harbored a strong animosity against the whole race, and a ferocious fire would kindle in his eye whenever he alluded to them. He was not naturally cruel in his disposition, but some early wrong he had received from their hands had implanted an implacable enmity in his heart toward them.

"Well, Scout, what news is there stirring?" asked the deacon, after having bountifully helped his unexpected guest. "Are the settlements all quiet?"

"Just now, around her, deacon," replied the Scout, "but the varmints have been at their bloody work down to Falmouth. One Sweat was shot while riding on horseback the other day, and I Parn that Greely of Yarmouth has been cruelly murdered by the reptyles."

"Do you know the tribe that committed the deed?" asked young Hancock.

"The Androscoggin, youngster, the most treacherous and blood-thirsty of the whole. The outlying sarpints are spread all over the eastern sections."

"Are there any signs of them at the west of us?" asked the deacon.

"Wal, now, that's part of my business here. There's a movement among the Ossipees, and I consate they are bent on mischief. I've been up in their region, and things don't look right anyhow. There was a mustering on the Saco a few days ago, and they were all daubed up with their infarnal war-paint."

"Did you venture among them?" said Annie.

"No, miss, not I. But I've had my eyes on 'em. I've been hunting out thereaways, and I reckoned it would be as well to look round a bit, to see if the pesky varmints were quiet."

"Were you not afraid of being discovered?" asked Ellen.

"When you catch a weasel asleep, gal, you may trap old Joe when he is on the trail! I've not lived in the wood so long to be sarcumvented by a copper-skin. Eh, Brave?" and he patted the head of the dog

which stood by his chair, receiving a portion of his supper, while he gave utterance to a low chuckle.

"But see here, deacon," he added, rising from his chair, "I've a word to say to you out o' doors. Stay here, pup, and finish your supper."

So saying, he unceremoniously placed his plate before the dog on the floor, then turned and left the room with Mr. Holden.

After they had got outside, and a little distance from the house, the Scout commenced, in a low tone:

"'Twas no use skeering the women folk in there deacon, so I thought it best to call you out."

"Does any danger threaten us, Scout?" asked Mr. Holden, with no slight degree of anxiety.

"Wal, deacon, 'tain't no use covering it up; the Ossipees are on the path, and likely's not the skulking thieves will come this way. Nay, I'm sure on't. I saw enough to convince me that it was their intention to send, if they have not already sent, war parties off in the different directions. I larnt as much as this, and then started to put the settlement on their guard. I warned 'em at Hollis and Buxton as I came along, and the sooner you around these parts get into the block-house the better."

"We will remove this very night; I will go and make preparations, while you, Scout, will proceed to notify our neighbors," and Mr. Holden was turning, in evident alarm, to go back to the house, when the Scout took him by the arm—

"'Tain't at all necessary to be in a hurry, deacon. Any time to-morrow will do. There's not the slightest danger to-night. I had a good day's start of them, and I can out-travel any red-skin in these parts, I reckon. I will go and put the rest on their guard,

and you can go home and sleep to-night, but be sure and move in the course of the day to-morrow."

"You will certainly come in, and spend the night with us."

"Well, I don't know," returned Scout, running his fingers through his head as if in perplexity, "ought to be on the move; no, deacon, I can't stay a night, but p'raps I'll spend an hour or two with the women folks. Heaven bless me, can't them gals talk. It does me good to hear their tongues run."

"Come in, and give us all the time you can spare they think a vast deal of you, Scout."

"Bless their dear little souls; I'd tramp a long ways to please 'em, or to keep the thievin' redskins from catchin' a glimpse of 'em. Here, pup."

Brave, who had been making observations with all the dignity of his master, as if he scented danger in the air, came soberly forward, and meekly entered the door behind the deacon and Scout, and when all were seated, he took his position beside his master's chair.

Joe was, indeed, a favorite with all, whether young or old. Aside from the incalculable service he rendered the frontier, by warning the people of meditated danger, there was a blunt honesty, and a perfect simplicity of character about the fellow that won its way directly to the heart of all his acquaintances. There was something pleasing to the settlers, too, in the manner in which he made himself at home, wherever he chanced to be. Through a range of country numbering scores and scores of miles, everybody—not of a coppery hue—knew Joe, and liked him. If he was within a half-dozen miles of a house at noon time, he straightway made his way to it, pulled the latchstring, and went in and helped himself; or if

there was nothing prepared, he quietly requested the good host to set something before him as quick as possible. If the people were away, he had no difficulty in finding the cupboard, and more than one settler had come home from a long journey and found the Scout quietly munching at his table. In answer to the housewife's amazed looks, he complimented some of her sauce or pies, and asked her whether there was anything stowed away where he had not seen it. So, too, at night, when the latch-string was pulled in, a thundering rap on the door called the startled occupant down to provide suitable accommodations for the hunter upon his floor. He never would sleep in bed. "I allers feel so warm," he remarked, "that I get nigh roasted to death."

No one could become offended at Joe. All understood him too well for that. If he chanced to be caught out in the woods, *he* understood how to nestle close under a log. With his blanket around him, the log partly beside, and partly above him, the "pup" stretched on the other side—what more comfortable couch could he wish. Then it was that he breathed the clear air of heaven, and had a sentinel that never failed to warn him of impending danger. In fact, Joe declared he would never sleep in a house at all, if it wasn't merely to let people know he hadn't turned savage entirely.

"Oh! we are so glad, Joe, that you are going to stay over night with us!" exclaimed both Annie and Ellen, when he entered and took his seat. "It's a long time since we had you here."

"Sorry to say I can't stay with you, gals, I've got a—the fact is, a little business that must be 'tended to to-morrow—sartin."

"O fie for your business!" exclaimed Annie. "Let that wait; you can give us certainly one night in so long a time as this."

"Like to do it, first rate," said the Scout, beginning to get uneasy in his seat, "but this ere—ahem—this business can't stand puttin' off nohow you can fix it."

The deacon now became fearful that the fellow's embarrassment would reveal the secret he was so anxious to retain. He, therefore, deemed it best to interfere at this point.

"I have tried to persuade Joe to remain with us, but his business is too urgent. You will have to give over the attempt therefore."

"We are so sorry," remarked Ellen. "If he cannot, that settles the question, of course. Let me see, Joe, it has been several months since you were last here."

"Yes; a right smart spell, when I come to think."

"Where have you been all the time?"

"Tramping round the country, fishing, hunting and watching of the redskins."

"And why do you watch them so closely?"

"You see, gals, they're beginning to git oneasy—ahem!" coughed the Scout terribly, afraid he had let slip the terrible secret. "That is, the safest plan is always to keep your eyes on them critters. They're powerful unreliable."

"I am glad you watch them so faithfully," remarked the deacon. "There are many of us, indeed, who owe their safety, under Heaven, to you. A year ago, last spring, you gave us warning of the Androscoggins, just in time for us to band together, and to beat them back. They came down so stealthily, that

had it not been for you they would have been on us before we could have made the least preparation."

"And the year before that," added Frederic, "how nicely he helped George and me out of that scrape my verdancy got us in?"

"How was it?" inquired Annie.

"George was at work in the meadow, when I came along with my gun, and we sat down to have a chat together. We had been thus engaged for about twenty minutes when George said something about some strange noise he had heard, just before I came, in the woods below us. The words were yet in his mouth, when I heard the same sound myself. I proposed that we should follow it up, and see what the animal could be; but George held back, and said it looked rather too dangerous for him. The truth was, he was afraid of Indians, and if he hadn't been so near the block-house, he would have left long before. I ridiculed the idea, and finally persuaded him to join me. We had gone but a few rods, when we heard another sound entirely different, and coming from another direction. This alarmed George, and he again hesitated, but I induced him to come forward. We had taken but a few more steps, when the curious sound was repeated, and turning my head toward the point from which it appeared to come, I caught sight of the Scout's head and shoulders, peering above a log, and making furious signs for us to retreat. It took me but a minute to comprehend him; we knew there were Indians in the matter, and we turned to run. The next minute, *crack—bang*—went several guns, and three Indians darted out of the woods in pursuit. As fate would have it, my gun was unloaded, and matters looked bad for us. All that re-

mained for us was to make for the block-house, yelling all the time, with every prospect of being tomahawked before we could reach it. Those Indians can run like bloodhounds, and they gained upon us with fearful rapidity. At this juncture, when I was about to propose to George that we should turn and give them battle, before we were too exhausted from running, the sharp report of a gun broke upon our ears, and the foremost savage gave a howl, and fell headlong to the ground. This so alarmed the other two, that they turned and fled. The shot was fired by Scout, and proved to be just in the nick of time."

"That was about the greenest thing I ever seed done in all my born days," said the Hunter, when the narration was finished. "I was so riled at seeing you two boys walking right into the trap that the reptyles had set for you, that I had a good notion to let you have a tustle with 'em to learn you better sense."

"It was the height of imprudence, indeed," added George, "but we learned the lesson, nevertheless."

"I didn't notice the noise myself till pup here called my attention, and then I knowed there was something up."

"Do you mean that Brave, there, notified you of the presence of Indians?" asked Ellen.

"That's jest what I mean, gal," returned the Scout, with considerable pride in his voice.

"How, in the name of common sense, did he do that?"

"Umph! how do you, gals, talk to each other?"

All indulged in a broad smile at the Scout's earnestness, and he continued:

"That 'ere pup understands every word I say jest

as well as any of you do ; and I can understand what he is driving at without axing him twice."

Joe deeming that there was a smile of incredulity upon several of the younger faces, added :—

"Pup, go to the window, and see what kind of a night it is."

Brave walked straight across the room to the window, and stood a moment looking out at the night, as if to note the appearance of everything, and then quietly returned again.

"Is it raining?"

He stood perfectly motionless.

"Is the wind blowing?"

Not the least sign or answer did he return

"Is it snowing?"

He was still dumb.

"Is it clear?"

A low whine, and a wag of his tail were now given.

"That means '*yes*,' said the Scout."

"Is there a moon in the sky?"

The same answer as to the preceding question was given to this.

At this point Ellen went to the window, and looked forth.

"He is right," said she, "there is a moon visible, just over the tree-top in the yard."

"It must be new, then," remarked the deacon.

"Yes, to-night is the first time I have seen it."

"Over which shoulder?" inquired Annie.

"Rather toward my left—an unlucky omen isn't it? If the dog could only tell us its character—that would be something of which Joe might well boast."

"Just wait a minute, gals," said the Hunter. "You hain't given me a chance to question him. Your tongues go so fast that an old fellow like me don't get much chance. I say, pup, I want to know what kind of a moon that is. Take another good look, so as to make sure."

The sagacious brute again approached the window, and rising on his hind feet, and placing his paws on the sill, looked up into the sky, as if carefully scrutinizing the features of the individual who is said to inhabit the satellite. Then, as if fully satisfied, he again resumed his seat beside his master. The latter wheeled around so as to face the dog.

"Now, pup, I want a plain answer to my question, and nothing else. Is that a full moon?—broad, round and full?"

This query received no response.

"Is it nearly full—not quite round?"

The same dignified silence as before.

"*Is it a new moon?*"

A low whine, and a responsive wag, constituted the instant reply to this question.

All clapped their hands with delight. Even the deacon and his wife joined in the expressions of wonder and admiration.

"I have never seen his equal."

"Wonderful!"

"Who could have believed it?"

"Nothing but a dog, and he knows that much."

Such and similar were the exclamations that fell from the lips of all. The Scout smiled in a complacent manner at the complete style in which his dog had vindicated himself, while Brave seemed to view the whole proceedings like a man who puts his hands in

his pockets and coolly whistles at his opponent, whom he has vanquished by a *coup de état*.

"I s'pose you don't think he knows nothin'," remarked Joe. "That ere was all accident, wasn't it?"

"Oh! no, we take back everything we said."

"He don't understand me neither when I speak, does he? Of course not; he's nothin' but a dumb brute. He can't make out what I mean when I speak—of course not—oh, no!"

"He's the smartest dog I have ever seen," remarked Mrs. Holden.

"Pup, go and thank her for that."

Brave walked directly to the lady, and reaching up, licked her hand in gratitude, and then returned to his seat.

"I declare!" exclaimed Annie, in dismay, "he must have understood every word that we said. If I had dreamed that I should have been more careful. I hope he does not hold hard feelings against any one."

"He don't agin nobody but redskins; them he can't like, and just there he's a good deal like his master. He's told me more than once when them red gentlemen have been too close, and has kept my hair on my crown. I s'pose you folks say such critters hain't got souls, don't you?"

"No doubt of it, Joe."

"You may think so, but you will never make me believe it. Ordinary dogs, I'll allow, hain't got no soul in them, but you can't preach any such doctrine to me about *that* pup; no, sir."

It was a pleasant belief for the honest-hearted hunter. Why seek to change it? If it afforded him pleasure, what necessity for destroying it? Necessity there might be, but all the eloquence of a Webster

could not have shaken an iota of the belief. Our friends who sat around had no desire to do so; they preferred to let him indulge in his quaint and harmless creed.

"He is certainly no ordinary dog," said Frederic, after a moment's pause. "I suppose it would take quite a sum to induce you to part with him."

"Quite a sum?"——

The hunter could not find words for his feelings, and seeing from the expression of their faces that this was a quiet joke, he forbore the attempt.

"How old is he?"

"Some six years, or thereabouts; just gettin' in his prime."

"To what breed does he belong?"

"No breed at all; there ain't any more like him, and never will be again; don't talk to me about breed."

"He looks something like the Newfoundland. I suppose he has been of great assistance to you in tracing the Indians?"

"I told you a minute ago that he has saved my crown more than once. Only last summer he got me out of one of the tightest fixes I ever got into."

"Let us hear about it."

"I had been up the Penobscot a good distance, and had just made up my mind to turn about and start for the settlement again, when"——

At this point, Brave arose to his feet, and went to the window. Looking out but a moment, he turned toward his master, and uttered a low whine.

"Do you know what that means?" asked the Scout.

"He wishes to go outside, I suppose."

"No such thing; he says there is a man out there." All started.

"Who can he be?" asked the deacon, looking around. "We are all here."

"The pup can't give his name very well," replied Joe, smiling at his own conceit, "but he says plain enough that there is a man there sure. Just look for yourselves."

Both George and Frederic approached the window, and looked forth. They gazed intently in every direction, but failed to detect anything suspicious. The moon was so faint, it is true, that it gave them little assistance, but they thought if the dog could detect a person, they assuredly ought to be able to do so. They finally turned their heads.

"At any rate, we can see no one."

"Is the fellow under the trees, pup?"

Brave replied in the affirmative, as before.

"We will soon find out, at any rate," said Scout, springing up, and moving toward the door. "Come, pup."

The moment the door was opened the dog whisked out and plunged toward the trees. The next instant an affrighted voice was heard:

"Git out—git out! I say, call your dog off."

"Then come out here and show yourself," called out the hunter.

A moment later a young man came gingerly forth.

"Is Joe Wier in there?" he asked, the moment he caught sight of the figure of a man near the door.

"Here he is; what do you want of him?"

"I want to see you a minute, come out here."

Scout recognized the voice as belonging to a young

man living several miles away, whose house he occasionally visited.

"Wal, Sam, what are you doing out here among the trees? Why don't you come in the house and show yourself?"

"I was lookin' for you, and s'pected you was here, but I didn't want to go in the house till I was sure of it."

"Why not?"

"Come away, or they'll hear us inside. When I go in there, them gals, Annie and Ellen, have a way of looking at a feller that I can't stand. That was why I wanted first to find whether you was in there. How did your confounded dog know I was out here?"

"Smelt you, I suppose. But Sam, what do you want to see me for?"

"Why, Joe, to tell you the truth, last night I had a dream about the Indians, and I felt all to-day as though things warn't right up among them plaguey Ossipees and Androscoggins, and I heard you was in the neighborhood, and I've come down here. Now, I want to know about it."

"Wal, Sam, I may as well tell you the truth; there is a goin' to be trouble, that's sartin. Them Ossipees are on the war-path, and we may expect a visit from them before you've seen the sun rise three times."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Sam, nearly springing off his feet. "'Then, we must be gettin' ready for 'em."

"They won't be here for twenty-four hours at least, as I took care to get a good start of them. That'll give you plenty time to git into the block-house and be all prepared."

"Have you told the folks inside there, Joe?"

"The deacon knows about it, and I s'pose he will tell them in the morning, which will be soon enough. No use of spiling the young folks' sleep to-night."

"No, I wouldn't either; if you tell any of 'em don't tell Annie Wilson. She's a kind of delicate creature, and it might—wal, it might make her nervous."

"I shall leave it entirely to the deacon. Wal, Sam, do you want anything more of me?"

"No; I believe not. I am much obliged to you. I won't sleep much to-night, you may be sure."

Thereupon Sam bade Scout good evening, and turned away. The latter immediately entered the house, accompanied, as a matter of course, by his dog. In response to their inquiries, he informed them that Sam Calmund wished to make a few inquiries of him. At the mention of his name, a smile came upon the face of Mrs. Holden and the younger portion of the family.

"Did he mention Annie's name?" inquired Ellen.

"I b'lieve he did say something about her--thought she was a nice gal, or something like that."

"Why didn't you bring him in?" inquired Annie.

"I did ask him, but he said you women folks had a way of looking at him that he couldn't stand."

A hearty laugh from all greeted that piece of information, which the individual referred to did not, perhaps, deem a part of Scout's duty to communicate.

"Sam is a good-hearted young man," added the deacon, "but he don't seem to make a very favorable impression in these parts."

"I suspect his business in the vicinity was more to gain a glimpse of Annie than to see you," remarked Frederic.

"No doubt that is the entire attraction," said

Annie, with much seriousness, "but you were interrupted, Mr. Wier"—

"Heh! what's that?" demanded the Scout.

"I was about to say, Joe, that you were interrupted in the midst of an interesting account of some exploit of your dog's. I am quite anxious to hear it."

All joined in the demands for the continuance, or rather resumption of it, and, after some preparation natural to all story-tellers, he began:

"As I was sayin', it was some time ago, when I was up toward the head waters of the Penobscot, and had got so well into the redskin country that I concluded it was time to make back tracks for the settlements. The pup told me he thought matters were beginning to look rather sealy, and it was his decided opinion that we had better retreat while there was a good chance for us. Brave's opinion on such a point ain't to be sneezed at, and I informed him I'd do as he advised. So, makin' sure that the primin' of my gun was right, I slung her over my shoulder, and started. I didn't notice anything partic'lar the first forenoon, but about the middle of the afternoon—umph! what's up now, pup?"

Whether it was his innate modesty, or what might have been the specific cause, Brave, at this juncture, left his position, and walking straight across the floor, placed his paws on the window-sill, looked forth and made precisely the same demonstration that he had done a few minutes before.

"What is the meaning of that?" inquired the deacon, who manifested considerable uneasiness at the singular action of the dog.

"He sees a man again," replied Scout. "We'll

soon find out what is the meaning of this kind of performance."

Opening the door, the man and brute passed out. The first glimpse of the former showed "Sam" standing a few yards away, as if waiting for the appearance of Scout. The latter went up to him, and asked, rather impatiently:

"Wal, Sam, how long does it take you to ax what you want to?"

"What's the use of gettin' mad, Joe? I didn't want to say but a word."

"Wal, out with it then."

"I just wanted to ax nothin' but a simple thing."

The Scout stood silent, waiting for the communication, and with considerable hesitation, the young man proceeded:

"Is Annie Wilson in there?"

"Sartinly."

"You hain't told her nothin' about the Ingins—that is, what you said to me?"

"I told you I was going to leave that to the deacon."

"Come to think, I b'lieve you did."

"Wal, what else?"

"So you hain't said nothin' to her?"

"No, no, no!"

"She don't seem kind of nervous?"

"Not that I've noticed."

"Not flustered—or sca'rt like?"

"What do you want to know that for?"

"'Tween you and me, Joe, I've a partic'lar interest in that young lady. We often think about each other."

"Yes, she spoke about you to-night."

"You don't tell me; what did she say?"

"She asked me why I didn't bring you in."

"Bless her soul! What did you say for me?"

"I told her you said you didn't like the way they looked at you and laughed when you were there."

"Pshaw! what made you tell her that, Joe?"

"'Cause you said so," was the satisfactory explanation.

"What else"——

"I've got no time, Sam, to talk with you. I must soon leave here. What is it you wanted to ask me?"

"I just wanted to know whether Annie was nervous."

"Is that all?"

"Nothing more. Good-night."

"See here, Sam," said the Scout, as the fellow turned to leave, "if you can't come inside, take my advice and leave. That pup knows the minute you come near the house, and if you are out there again, I shan't call him off when he starts."

"All right—good-night."

The Scout's hand was already upon the latch-string, when Sam turned about.

"I say, Joe, be careful and don't let Annie get nervous—good-night."

This time Sam departed in good earnest, and our readers will never hear of him again.

"It seems destined that you shall not finish your story," remarked the deacon, after he had entered and explained the interruption.

"I'll finish this time if a whole pack of Ossipees come yelling round the outside.

"As I've been sayin' for a considerable time, it happened when the pup and me were well up the Penob-

sect, and so far in the redskin country that I warn't sartin I'd ever git back agin. Findin' things were beginnin' to look squally, me and the dog started for home on a party good gait. We didn't see nothin', as I b'lieve I've observed before, till the afternoon, when the sigs began to git plenty. The pup kept smyllin' the air and wagging his tail in a style that showed he warn't satisfied at the way things looked.

"I kept close along the river, and went into the water half a dozen times, so as to throw the varmints off the scent, if they had really got on my trail. That is, I didn't 'spect to blind 'em entirely, but to bother 'em as that they couldn't come rather fast."

"But, Joe, you can go as fast as any Indian; I am certain of that," remarked Mr. Holden.

"That's all so, deacon, but them redskins have a way of sending messages through the air to each other, that can out-travel the swiftest greyhound that ever showed his heels. There be some high hills in them parts, and if a lot of the varmints should git on one behind me they'd very soon let some more of 'em on the hill a half dozen miles in front know that I was comin', and, of course, they'd be on the lookout."

"But could you not avoid them?"

"Yes, sir; but I couldn't avoid 'em and travel fast enough to leave the varmints that might be traveling after me."

"I understood that fully, Joe," added the deacon, "I asked that the others might be enlightened; proceed, and I will not interrupt you again."

"It was gettin' well on toward sundown, and I was wishin' for night in the tallest kind of way, when the pup told me that the Indians were after us and no mistake"——

"Let me ask you how he did that?" interrupted Annie, who was absorbed in the narrative.

"I couldn't tell you exactly, as you hain't larned the language of the feller; but there warn't any mistake about it; he said that, and nothin' else."

"But how could *he* know?" persisted the inquisitive girl.

"He took the back trail until, I s'pose, he got a sight of the varmints, and it was when he catshed up to me agin that he let me into the secret. The next time I'm out on a trail-hunt you gals had better go with me, and then, like 'nough, you'll git the A. B. C's of the pup's language."

"Shortly after the pup let me know we had 'em comin' on behind like all fury, I struck a bluff, where I got a squint for several miles of the river. I hadn't looked a dozen seconds when I seed a sight of the varmints about a mile off, comin' right along in my tracks. Wal, there! that was a cheerin' sight, you may be sure. I looked at 'em just long 'nough to be sartin, and then we tore down the bluff, and struck a line for the settlements."

"It was lucky that night was so close at hand. The sun had already dropped behind the woods, and it warn't long before I know'd the redskins couldn't follow me if they'd put on spectacles. This give me a good start, and I know'd 'nough to make the best use of it. When it was fairly dark I swam the river, and as soon as I touched the other side I began walking, and never stopped till the sun came over the hills. Then, as I'd been trampin' all day and all night, I felt a little tired"—

"And hungry, too, I'll warrant?"

"Considerable; but that warn't worth mindin'; I

was good for three days without a mouthful, and so was the pup. Howsumever, he lit on a toad or some reptile occasionally, and so kept his innards from cavin' in entirely. I didn't dare shoot a gun, for that would have brought 'em about my ears in a half hour.

"Wal, I went to sleep, and never woke up till noon, when the pup was rubbing his nose in my face. He'd been on the back trail agin, and found out that we'd have to tramp powerful to save our top-knots. I didn't lose any time; but slung my rifle over my shoulder, and started. Every once in a while the pup took the back track, and if I hadn't known any other way, I could have told by the short time he was absent, that the varmints warn't far off.

"Along in the afternoon, spite of all I could do, they were gaining on me fast. I lost so much time in takin' to the water, and dodgin', and tryin' to cover up my trail, that I came powerful near bein' catched three different times. To make things worse, I sprained my ankle, and it began to hurt so after a while that I lost ground faster than ever. When the pup noticed my fix he got anxious. He had helped me hide my trail by rumplin' the leaves behind me, so that my tracks couldn't be seen. Howsumever, his couldn't be covered up, and that sarved the varmints just as well, as they know'd we was together.

"When I was about used up an idea struck me. Reaching a stony place on the edge of the river, I stepped out and hid under a tree that ran out from the shore. I then motioned to the pup not to follow me, but take another course. He catched the hint at once, and went right ahead, rumplin' the leaves harder than ever.

“Wal, I’d been there about five minutes, when along they came—a whole pack of redskins. They never stopped, but went right on, and I grieved mighty powerful when I thought how nice the pup was foolin’ ‘em. I staid there all night, when the pur came back again. He know’d he’d blinded *them* rascals sure ’nough.

“We got an old log into the water, floated all night, and by mornin’ was so near the settlements that we was safe—heigh! I must be off.”

The Scout was pressed by Mrs. Holden and the younger part of the family to remain for the night; but he declined, saying he had some errand to deliver down the road, which must be attended that evening, and taking his rifle from the corner, he called his dog, and bidding the family good night, he left the house, proceeding with long strides and a swinging gait on his route.

After he had left, Mr. Holden revolved the matter in his mind, whether he should make his family acquainted with the unwelcome tidings he had received that evening, or wait until the morning before he divulged them. And yet he wished to consult with them, for notwithstanding the assurances of the Scout he felt strongly inclined to take up his abode in the block-house that night. The family noticed his abstraction and unusual gravity, and his wife, in a tone of some apprehension, addressed him:

“Husband, what is the matter? There is something preying on your mind. I am fearful the Scout was the bearer of bad news.”

“It is too true, Abby,” replied Mr. Holden, after a brief pause. “I have received evil tidings by him.”

And he related to the eager listeners what the Scout had told to him.

"And now what shall we do?" he added, "Shall we remove to-night, or"——

"Remove by all means to-night!" broke in Mrs. Holden, who was constitutionally timid—"let us fly to the block-house, dear husband!"

"Yes, uncle, let us go," added Annie Wilson in tones of earnestness. "Remember the poor Bryan family in Gorham, whose delay proved so fatal to them!"

"What say you, George and Ellen?" asked Mr. Holden.

"Why, father, I do not think there is much danger to-night," replied his son, "and yet—perhaps"——

"What is *your* opinion, Frederic?" said Ellen, interrupting her brother, and turning to the person addressed, evincing by her tone and manner that she should be governed by his decision.

"As for myself," replied Hancock, "I have such perfect confidence in the Scout, that I should follow his advice and remain here. If the danger were imminent, he is not the man to lull us into false security. Besides, the hour is getting late, and it would take us some time to get ready for a start. If there is danger abroad, we should be more exposed to it on the road than here. I am for remaining. George and I will keep watch through the night, and I will answer that no harm will befall us."

After discussing the subject, it was finally resolved not to leave the house that night, but that early in the morning they would pack up and depart. The doors were then strongly barricaded—fire-arms were

got ready for instant use—and after a more than usually fervent prayer from the deacon, the family retired, save the young men. The night, however, passed without disturbance, although the anxiety of the inmates rendered their slumbers broken and restless.

CHAPTER III.

THE BLOCK-HOUSE.

With the first dawn of day every inhabitant of the settlement was astir, and at an early hour teams, loaded with household utensils, were on their way to the block-house. The settlement only contained seven families; but although the fort was quite capacious, yet, it must be confessed, it afforded rather close quarters. Throughout the day there was a constant passing to and fro, and notwithstanding the apprehensions all felt, the excitement of removing and disposing of the furniture of the different families created not a little animation, and the light, merry laugh of Ellen, and the jovial humor of George, served admirably to enliven the spirits of all.

“By jabers!” said a son of the Green Isle, employed by one of the settlers, who seemed greatly struck with the conduct of Ellen, “she’s a broth of a girl, and thinks no more of the bloody hathen and their tomahawks than I would of meeting a Connaught boy with his shillelagh. She’s true grit, anyhow!”

Pat was right. Ellen was not one to borrow trouble, or to give way to unnecessary fears.

"It is time enough to turn pale, and to let your teeth chatter, you silly puss, when the war-whoop rings in your ears, and the scalping-knife flashes before your eyes!" she said, laughingly to her cousin, whose nervous apprehension was too apparent to be disguised.

It was not out of bravado that Ellen made light of the matter. She did it for the purpose of cheering her mother and cousin, both of whom needed something to enliven their spirits.

By noon the removal was completed, and the furniture arranged. The cattle were driven inside the palisade, and a watch detailed. The block-house was fifty feet square. Its second story jutted out a little over the first, and, instead of windows, was pierced with port-holes, to be used in case of an attack. A tower sprung from the centre of the building, in which was mounted a small swivel on a pivot. The stockade that surrounded the house was so high that the Indians could not climb over it, and the posts placed so near together that they could not get through it. Care had been taken that the posts should not be of a size to afford protection to the foe. A man could not screen himself behind them, without leaving some part of his body exposed. The cattle were protected from the shots of the enemy by a pen of logs.

After the bustle consequent upon the change of quarters had subsided, and the inmates found time to reflect upon their situation, a spirit of gloom settled upon the party. The uncertainty as to the length of their imprisonment was no small source of discomfort. It might be months—nay, years—before they could return to their homes. In repeated instances, they well knew, the inhabitants of other settlements had been kept close prisoners for two and three years, not daring to venture out to till the ground, and suffering the severest want; "for months," as the old chroniclers tell us, "not tasting bread or meat."

Such, in all probability, they felt, would be their fate; and they brooded despondingly on fields run to waste, on habitations committed to the flames, and on cattle shot down or driven off. This last evil, quite as serious as others mentioned, they were especially subjected to; for it was impossible, for want of room, to lay in fodder sufficient to keep their cattle inside the stockade for any length of time, therefore, as soon as that gave out, there was no other resource left but to drive them out to seek their own food.

They did not much fear the result of an attack on the block-house. It was so strongly fortified that, with due watchfulness, they felt it to be impregnable. Sometimes these fortresses had been carried, when fire had been employed as one of the dreadful agents of destruction. As a general thing, however, the Indians would lurk in ambush, with a dogged perseverance for months around these garrisons, for the purpose of starving out their inmates, or of shooting down or making prisoners of those who should rashly venture out.

It was impossible to foretell the quarter whence the attack would be made. Every clump of bushes might be a covert for the enemy—every tree conceal a foe. In the very grass, snake-like, they might hide, springing up and attacking you unawares. You only knew you were surrounded by an unseen foe—and how much more dreaded from being invisible!—liable at any moment to be attacked; not in open and honorable warfare—if any warfare is honorable—but secretly and treacherously, and stricken down as the midnight assassin strikes down his victim.

The afternoon passed away without any signs of the enemy. Indeed, they had no apprehension of their appearance in the day time, although it was not uncommon for men and women to be shot down at their very thresholds at midday, or a child to be snatched away from the door-steps. Generally, how-

ever, the Indians selected for the time of attack an hour two before day-break, as they deemed that the slumbers of their intended victims were then the soundest.

Young Holden and Hancock assumed the duty of watchmen the first night. Their station was in the tower, which commanded a view of nearly the whole settlement, as well as a long reach of the river. Before ascending to their look-out, the young men joined the rest of the inmates, who had assembled in the dining-hall, to perform their evening devotions. In the absence of the stated minister, the deacon conducted the services, which were closed by all uniting in a hymn of praise, after which, at an early hour, all, save the two watchers, sought repose, and silence reigned throughout the house. It was a lovely night. The moon was nearly at her full, and field, forest and river were bathed in a flood of light. Every object was distinctly visible in the clearing, and the distant river, unruffled by the breeze, shone like a vein of burnished silver, save near its banks, where the shrubbery obstructed the rays of the moon, the water appeared of inky blackness. Every tree and bush threw a deep shadow on the ground, and oftentimes the young men imagined they detected the lurking foe in these obscure patches. Not a sound was heard to break the silence, which was almost oppressive, except that at distant intervals the melancholy hooting of the night-owl came faintly from the depths of the forest. At one time, about ten o'clock, the attention of the young men was aroused by what seemed the baying of a dog afar off.

"Do you hear that, Fred?" asked George, in a whisper, holding his breath, and listening for a repetition of the sound.

"Yes," replied Hancock, after a pause, "it sounded like the baying of a dog. But it could not be that."

"Why not?"

"Because the Indians would not bring their dogs with them on a night attack, or if they did, they have trained their animals so well that they would never betray their presence in such a noisy manner."

"What could it be, then?"

"Probably the bark of a wolf, or the cry of some wild animal. But, by heavens! there is something moving in the shadow of the bushes yonder!" and he pointed to a small clump that stood just out of the forest, some hundred yards from the block-house.

"It is a passing breeze that moves the foliage, a shifting of the shadow. I have been deceived by it a number of times," whispered George.

"No, I'll stake my life that was not it. Look, look! there it is again! See to the priming of your gun, George!"

The eyes of the young men were now intently fixed on the clump of bushes; but for a while nothing could be detected to confirm their suspicion. Presently, however, a tall figure was seen to dart across the patch of moonlight between the bushes and the forest, and in a moment was lost to sight.

"It was an Indian," said George, hurriedly, "they are prowling around us! Had I not better arouse them below?"

"Not yet—let us wait a while. The fellow is evidently reconnoitering. He is coming this way. Stand in the corner, George, out of the light, or the scamp may give you a taste of cold lead."

For half an hour or more nothing was seen of the skulker. Searching glances were sent in every direction, and their ears were bent to catch the slightest sound, but nothing was seen or heard to denote the presence of a living being. The young men scarcely drew a long breath, so completely was their attention absorbed.

"He must have gone the other way," said George, in a scarcely audible tone.

The words had not fairly left his lips, when a slight noise was heard outside the palisade, at that part where the shadows rested, and presently a voice was heard, speaking in a subdued tone:

"Halloo, there!"

No reply was made, and again the voice was heard:

"In the tower there—are you asleep?"

The voice was immediately recognized, and a joyful exclamation burst simultaneously from the young men.

"The Scout! The Scout!"

"Whist, whist! youngsters—there may be more ears in the neighborhood than mine. Sound travels mighty far on a still night, especially near the water. But one of you come down to the palisade for a moment. Don't disturb the elders, I've only a word of caution to give you."

Hancock immediately descended, and invited the old man inside.

"No," replied the Scout, "I must go along a piece, where I will camp out. My old bones would not rest well on a softer couch than pine boughs."

"But how did you approach the block-house?" asked Frederic. "We kept vigilant watch, we thought, in all directions, but did not see you, except when you left the bushes out yonder."

"Wal, youngster, it is one of the tricks I larnt of the cunning sarpiets. They are snakey critters, them redskins, and a plaguy sight worse than the rattle-snake, for they do not give warning before they strike."

"But what brought you here, Scout? All seems quiet to-night—is there anything astir?"

"There's no telling, the vermin's are so desatful. But I reckon they will not disturb you to-night. I've been scrummaging around here this hour or more, and have seen no signs of them. I was glad to find that you had taken my advice. My object in calling as I passed was to caution you to be on your guard."

"We shall be careful—depend upon that," said Hancock.

"Yes, youngster, you may be for a while, but people grow restless and venturesome after a time. Finding you have taken an alarm, the skulking rascals may hang round here for weeks and months, waiting for an opportunity to pounce upon you. I know the reptiles well, and I charge you, and tell the rest on 'em, to be watchful. When you think yourselves the most secure, one of the painted devils may be at your elbow, with his cursed tomahawk ready to brain you. Good-night, youngster, and don't forget what I've said to you!"

Thus saying, the old fellow dropped slowly on the ground, and for a little while was seen worming his way toward the forest. In a few minutes, however, not a sign could be discovered that there was a living thing in the neighborhood. Frederic again ascended to his post, not a little relieved of the anxiety that so lately pressed upon him.

CHAPTER IV.

SABBATH IN THE WOODS.

Would the reader like to take a moonlight flitting through the forest? We feel greatly inclined to follow in the footsteps of the Scout—it is such a glorious night, and the moonbeams, falling on and through the parti-colored leaves, present such fine effect. The foliage is somewhat thinned out, so that the forest paths are illuminated with that "dim, religious light" which tends so powerfully to impress the heart with chaste and hallowed feelings. Nowhere is the mind so powerfully affected with a solemnity, almost amounting to awe, as in the depths of the forest, particularly in that season when the leaves begin to fall.

At each step there arises a muffled sound from the dry and fallen foliage which is displaced by your tread, and all around you the light breeze moves the tree-tops, eliciting a sound like the gently rippling sea—while the withered leaves are constantly flitting through the air; gentle monitors, reminding you of your own decay, and whispering in your ear with startling earnestness the prophetic declaration, “we all do fade as the leaf!”

Men talk of being subdued and awed when treading the aisles of vast cathedrals. But what are those puny works of man, compared with the vast forest sanctuaries—“God’s first temples?” Beautifully has our own Bryant said:

“The groves were God’s first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them; ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems, in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down
And offered to the Mightiest, solemn thanks
And supplications. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences,
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thoughts of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty.”

It is not the educated and refined alone who are subjected to these influences—the unlettered and unpolished share in them. The rude hunters of the period of which we write, dwelling apart from men, and in constant warfare, with the wild beast, or the as wild savage, were touched by them. There was something in those dim solitudes which solemnized

their hearts, and moulded their spirit to worship. Rude as they were—habituated as they had been to the lonely life of the wilderness—they could not resist the “sacred influences” of the place.

There is, not far from the city where the writer resides, a beautiful sheet of water bearing the somewhat singular name of “Sabbath Day Pond.” Tradition informs us that this pond derived its name from a number of hunters, who used to hunt for beaver on the neighboring streams and the wild game of the forest, and who agreed to meet at this pond to keep the Sabbath. This was the destination of the Scout, and the main purpose of his journeying so late in the night was to meet his brother hunters the next morning at the chosen spot. We mention these facts, not that they have any particular connection with our story, but merely to give the reader a clearer view of the character of one who will be found a prominent actor in it, and to show that, though belonging to a semi-civilized class, leading a wild, unrestrained life, he, too, was touched by those reverential feelings which nature in some of her aspects fails not to inspire.

We said we felt greatly inclined to follow the Scout, but, leaving him to pursue his solitary journey, we must return to the block-house, where the main interest of our story lies.

As the Scout surmised, the night passed without disturbance. The next day being Sabbath, a marked stillness reigned throughout the building. Every movement seemed regulated by the sanctity of the day. There was a staidness in the deportment of all, from the oldest to the youngest, that evinced the deep respect they paid to holy time. The religious sentiment predominated with the early New England settlers, and marked them a peculiar people. The historian tells us that “the proprietors of the towns, when they had but their fort and garrison, took care

to have the public worship of God maintained in it on the Sabbath."

Divine service was held in the forenoon and afternoon, conducted in a very respectable manner by Deacon Holden. It consisted in reading the Scriptures, prayers, singing and exhortation. After the services were concluded, Frederic and George ascended the tower, where they were soon joined by Ellen and Annie. It was in the depth of the "Indian summer," and it was one of those warm, delicious days peculiar to the season. There was a slight haze in the atmosphere, not enough to obscure the view, but just sufficient to soften down and mellow the scene—like a delicate veil thrown over a beautiful woman, not concealing but enhancing her charms.

The view spread out before the party was unsurpassingly grand and beautiful. Around them the forest stretched away for miles, gorgeously colored, as if a thousand rainbows were entangled in its meshes, while far in the distance, forming a vast amphitheatre, the misty hills shot up their purple heights into the air. To quote again from Bryant:

"The mountains that infold

In their wide sweep the colored landscape round,
Seem groups of giant kings, in purple and gold,
That guard the enchanted ground."

In front of them, with here and there a tree interspersed, the clearing sloped to the margin of the river, which in graceful bends flowed, now calmly in gleaming splendor, and now in sparkling ripples, as it broke over some mimic fall, while all along its banks the still water reflected the variegated tints of the trees and shrubbery that bent over it. It seemed like some enchanted stream, whose bed was paved with gold, and encrusted with myriad gems, whose brilliant colors lent to the tide their various hues

Not a breath of air was stirring, nor a sound heard, to disturb the tranquility of the scene.

"Beautiful! gloriously beautiful!" exclaimed Ellen, in a subdued tone, after gazing awhile spell-bound with the sight.

"You look sad, Annie," said George, stepping to the side of his cousin—"How can you be so, with such a scene before you?"

"Not sad, George, but there is a strange feeling thrills me when I gaze upon such a scene of splendor as we now behold. I have vague yearnings for—I know not what," and a faint smile illuminated her countenance.

"They are common to us all, Annie," remarked Frederic. "Who has not been oppressed with the gorgeousness of an autumnal sunset, and felt almost a willingness as the light slowly faded that so his life might melt away?"

"The emotions experienced on such occasions, Frederic, are vastly different from those excited by the present scene," remarked Ellen—"at least I am differently impressed. At the hour of sunset, as the golden light fades away, and the atmosphere so lately surcharged with lustre becomes dim, I am filled with an overpowering dreariness. The deepening shadows that stretch like a funeral pall over the lately glowing scene, seem to penetrate and veil my heart, shrouding it in gloom. I feel as if gazing into a vast sepulchre—as if a visible eternity, mysterious and awful, were spread out before me. No wonder you smile, Frederic, at my having such feelings!"

"And how does *this* scene affect you?" asked Hancock.

"It raises my thoughts to a brighter, purer, more glorious world, of which it seems the type—only in that higher sphere there will be no change."

"I believe it is the idea of the transitoriness of the pomp that surrounds us that imbués me with melancholy. I sigh to think that such a show of magnifi-

cence will, in a few days, pass away like a brilliant dream," said Annie.

"But only to give place to other displays, Annie," said George; "does not that thought cheer you?"

"Let us have some music!" said Ellen, sadly. "Think of some hymn, Frederic, suitable to the day and the scene."

The proposition was at once acceded to, and soon the sweet soprano of Ellen, and the rich alto of Annie mingled with the mellow tenor of Frederic, and the full, deep bass of George, in one of those grand old German chorals, which seem to embody the very soul of harmony. The following was the commencing stanza of the hymn:

"O Lord, our heavenly King,
Thy name is all divine;
Thy glories round the earth are spread,
And o'er the heavens they shine."

Their voices blended harmoniously, and the scene, the hour, and the words so appropriate to the occasion, together with the full, stately music, seemed to inspire the singers. As the song rose on the still air, first one, and then another of the inmates stepped out into the enclosure, until at last all were gathered in front of the block-house, listening with rapt attention to the sublime strains.

"It is well, my dear children," said Deacon Holden, in a tone of gratification, as the last note died away. "A most fitting song, and, we trust, an acceptable one to 'our Heavenly King.' Let us all unite now, in my favorite tune—you all know it," and those in the tower taking the lead, the whole assembly joined in singing that noble composition—Luther's celebrated Judgment Hymn. And so closed the first Sabbath in the block-house.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAPTURE.

A number of days passed without any signs of the Indians. Frequently those to whom confinement was irksome would venture outside the palisade, taking care to go well armed; and growing every day more bold, would visit their fields and dwellings, making repairs, etc., half-resolving to return to them again. Hancock urged upon them, from time to time, the warnings of the Scout, but this did not restrain them. It may be supposed that, to the younger portion of the Holden family, the restraint to which they were subjected was borne very patiently. They found relief in each other's society, and the constant contact into which they were thrown, tended to mature those mutual sentiments of regard at which we have hinted.

A week had nearly elapsed since they had taken refuge there, when one afternoon Ellen proposed to George a visit to their home. She had left behind some articles which she wanted. George readily agreed to the proposal, but Hancock, who, at the moment, entered the room, protested strongly against their going.

"There is not the least danger, Fred," said Holden. "A number of the settlers have been out all the forenoon, and some of them have scoured the woods. I have my doubts, after all, if old Joe was not mistaken, and drove us in here, like a flock of frightened sheep, without any cause."

"No, no; depend upon it, George, he is not the man to do that," replied Hancock, with much earnestness. "There is danger abroad or he would not have warned us. Remember his parting injunction. He

knows better than we do the character of the Indian, and the arts they employ to lull their intended victims to security.

"Well, Nell, what do you say?" remarked George. "I am willing to run the chance if you are."

"There can be no danger, Frederic," said Ellen, turning toward Hancock, "else why have you ventured out for the last two days? Even now you have just come in from the woods. I was watching you, and what you have said was only intended to frighten me."

"I went out, Ellen, on an errand to my father, and I have the means to protect myself. I took a circuit in the woods merely to assure myself that the savages were not lurking in the neighborhood."

"But you detected no signs of them?"

"Not the least."

"Then I may surely go in safety," rejoined Ellen. "Ah, Fred, you are fond of teasing one!" and she gave him an arch smile.

"No, dear Ellen," he replied, in a tone which brought the warm blush to the cheek of the maiden, who only heard his words, "but when not only your life but my happiness is at stake, can you blame me for undue apprehension? But go, if you will; I shall wait anxiously for your return. Would that I could go with you."

"Never you fear, Hancock, we shall be back in good season to laugh at your fears," said George, gaily, and shouldering his rifle, he and Ellen left the block-house, and proceeded on their way.

The house of Mr. Holden was about half a mile from the Fort, and was hidden from the sight of those in the block-house by a grove, through which a path led to it. Into this path the brother and sister were seen to enter, and then were lost to sight.

Frederic would gladly have accompanied the party, but at the time his father required his presence. Although satisfied by personal scrutiny that no immi-

ment danger threatened them, yet he felt ill at ease, and, after a short time elapsed, he would from time to time go to the port-hole in his room, which commanded a view of the clearing, to watch for their return. Nor was he the only anxious watcher. Annie Wilson had not heard of the excursion until the parties had left, and her apprehensions were tenfold greater than Hancock's. Immediately on hearing it she visited the tower, and eagerly watched the grove whence they would issue on their return.

"How could he be so rash!" she murmured to herself, with pallid lips, "after all the warning we have had?" and leaning her cheek on her hand, with her eyes fixed in one direction, she gave way to every fear which an active imagination could call up. At one time she imagined him—for she thought only of George—a prisoner in the hands of the red men, bound and scourged; again she pictured him, chained to the stake, surrounded with combustibles, his infuriated captors dancing around him in fiendish glee; and then again she beheld him lying mangled and lifeless on the ground. So intently was she absorbed in George's fate, she had not a thought to bestow on the situation of Ellen.

She had sat thus for some time, buried in painful reverie—she knew not how long—when she was startled by what sounded like a distant scream. She rose hastily to her feet, when the faint report of a gun came from the vicinity of the grove—at the same moment she saw two or three men in the clearing start, as if in alarm, in the direction of the block-house. Scarcely waiting to take a second glance, with trembling limbs and tottering steps, the half-distracted girl rushed from the tower, and in a few moments, pale with affright, stood in the presence of Hancock.

"They are attacked! they are attacked! Oh, save him, Frederic, save him!" she cried, in agonizing tones, raising her hands beseechingly.

Hancock did not stop to question her, but burst-

ing into another room, where three or four young men were assembled, he shouted:

"My rifle, my rifle! Ellen is taken—follow me, all of you!" and bounding from the room, he was soon outside of the defences, and on his way down the slope, ere those whom he addressed had sufficiently recovered from their astonishment to obey him.

With a speed rivaling that of a deer, he pressed toward the grove, while far in the rear three or four others followed in hot pursuit, vainly endeavoring to overtake him.

On entering the little patch of woods, the young man checked his speed, and strove to collect his thoughts, which were in a whirl of excitement, that he might form some plan of action. It was some time before he could still the tumult of his brain, wrought almost to frenzy with the idea of Ellen's seizure. As Annie's sole thoughts were fixed on George when she implored Hencock's aid, in like manner were Frederic's concentrated on Ellen. It was her peril alone that filled his mind. He had not stopped to question Annie's statement, but had rushed forth on the impulse of the moment, believing that Ellen was in danger. But now, on looking around him, and observing the perfect quiet that prevailed—perceiving nothing to indicate the presence of the foe—no signs of a recent struggle—it first struck him that Annie might have been mistaken. He had not heard the scream or the report of the gun, and the query arose in his mind, how should Annie know that an attack had been made?

A short distance in front of him stood the house, the front door of which was open, as if the party for whose safety he was so much interested were inside. His fears in some measure subsided at sight of this, and as he drew near he listened, expecting to hear Ellen's well-known laugh, and watched the open door, anticipating her appearance. As he approached the door an

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object met his eye which sent the blood curdling to his heart.

A few rods from the house, toward the banks of the river, he discovered on the ground the body of an Indian. On his forehead was the mark of a bullet, which had perforated his brain. As Hancock drew near he saw a portion of Ellen's dress fluttering in his hand, clutched as in a death-grasp. The truth at once flashed upon him. The savage had seized her, and had met his death from George's rifle. But where were they? He wildly shouted their names. Again and again he called upon them, but no answer came. His brain reeled as the terrible truth was forced upon him that she had been murdered. He shuddered as he looked around him, fearing that his glance might fall on her mangled remains. Racked by an almost insuperable agony, he stood by the corpse of the savage, gazing distractedly in various directions, when the men who followed him came panting to his side.

"Oh, God! what shall be done, Pearson? They have murdered her!" said Hancock, in a hollow tone, addressing the foremost of the party. "Look, some of you, look for her body!" and he leaned against a tree, for the moment completely prostrated in body and mind.

He had not the slightest doubt of Ellen's fate; for, maddened by the fall of one of their band, the savages would not hesitate at once to despatch her. This was the conclusion which fastened itself upon his mind. Frederic was naturally firm, and not easily shaken, but the certainty he felt of shortly being called upon to gaze upon the idol of his heart, horribly despoiled by the cruel scalping-knife—the fair "temple of her brain" shattered by the murderous tomahawk—entirely overpowered him. He recovered himself shortly, however, although the pallor of his cheek and the quivering of his lip too plainly told the inward struggle.

The party had immediately disappeared in search

of the supposed dead bodies of their friends, and for some minutes had been thus employed, when an exclamation from one of them, who had followed up the bank of the stream, arrested the attention of all.

"There they are—there they are! She's alive! They've taken her prisoner! I see her in the bows!"

There was an instantaneous rush, and all eyes were directed to the spot indicated by the speaker.

Far up the river, close in shore, as if to escape observation, a canoe was seen, rapidly propelled by two savages. In front sat a female, immediately recognized by Frederic as Ellen. Casting but one quick glance at the fugitives, Frederic bounded from the spot, and plunged into the woods.

There was a long bend in the river just here, and quite a narrow portage cut off a long distance. Hancock's movement, therefore, was at once divined.

"He's gone to head them off," said young Pearson. "I will follow him, and the rest of you had better be looking around to see if you can find anything of George."

Scarcely heeding the obstacles in his path, Frederic pressed forward with incredible speed. Leaping over fallen trees, over broken rocks, forcing his way through thicket and bush—on, on he went, until he crossed the portage. He was not a moment too soon. As he burst through the last clump of bushes, and stood on the margin of the stream, which at this part was quite narrow, the canoe, urged forward by two powerful Indians, was nearly abreast of him. As quick as thought he levelled his rifle, but at the same instant the forward savage dropped his paddle, sprang up, and seizing Ellen, raised her in front of him.

"Speak! Tell him," shouted the Indian in the ear of the terrified girl—"tell him shoot 'em Indian, me kill 'em squaw!" and he brandished the tomahawk threateningly over her head.

"Do not fire, dear Frederic!" exclaimed the trembling girl. "He threatens to kill me if you do!"

An instant more and the caution would have been too late, for already had Hancock sighted the Indian in the stern, and his finger was pressed hard against the trigger. But the consequences of such an act flashed suddenly upon him, and he refrained. Well he knew it was no idle threat of the savage, and with a shudder, he lowered his rifle. The Indian, however, as if distrusting him, still stood with the deadly weapon upraised to strike, the canoe, in the meanwhile, moving slowly on her course.

"Ellen, dear Ellen!" exclaimed Frederic, in tones of bitter anguish, "must I leave you in their hands? God knows, I would willingly sacrifice my life to save yours!"

"I do not doubt it, Frederic! but what can you do?"

"Nothing, nothing, dear girl!" said Hancock—"but I will not abandon you; I will rescue you, or die in the attempt."

"I do not think my life is in danger. Cheer up mother as well as you can, and tell her that you left me in good spirits. God bless you, Frederic—perhaps you can find some way to release me."

"I will, I will," shouted Frederic, for the distance had greatly increased between them. At that moment he thought of George, and he questioned Ellen respecting him.

She pointed with her arm up the river, and "wounded—captive," were all the words he could catch.

Some distance from where Frederic was stationed, the river made round a high bluff, and flowed in a different direction. Hancock stood watching the receding boat, which bore away all he held dear in life. The Indian had lowered his weapon, but still stood with Ellen in front of him. The bark approached the bluff, and just as it floated from sight, Ellen raised her hand to her lips and waved it toward Frederic. He had hardly time to return the signal, when the

canoe passed around the high point. For one or two minutes Hancock remained, with his gaze fixed on the spot last occupied by the little vessel, then turned with a heavy heart to retrace his steps.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE TRAIL.

The agony of Mrs. Hobbs and Annie we should vainly attempt to describe. As one and another of the party who had gone out in pursuit returned to the block-house, they were met by Mrs. Holden and Annie, who vainly strove to obtain a gleam of hope as they wildly questioned them in regard to the missing ones; and when at last Hancock returned, and brought certain tidings of their fate, their cup of anguish was filled to overflowing.

In the frenzy of her grief the mother rapidly paced the room, wildly wringing her hands, and frantically calling the names of her children.

"Give them back, give them back, O God! and leave me not childless!" was her frequent passionate exclamation.

Poor Annie, in the meanwhile, having heard the worst, stood pale and statue-like, a moan of distress breaking from time to time from her lips. The blow had stupefied her. She had a sense of some great calamity having befallen her—the shadow of a fearful wo darkened her soul, and bewildered her brain. It was piteous to see her press her hand to her forehead and then look around confusedly, as if to inquire into the nature of this terrible bereavement.

The good deacon strove hard to keep control of his feelings, and to administer comfort to his partner; but the struggle was a hard one, and at times the strong man shook like a reed.

Hancock soon after his arrival had sought another apartment, but in the course of half an hour he entered the room where most of the inmates were assembled, accompanied by two other young men, Pearson, and one named Bailey, all armed and equipped as for a journey.

"You will save them—you will restore them to us!" exclaimed Mrs. Holden, springing to his side, and clinging convulsively to his arm.

"If God spares my life I will do it. He, only, knows the issue. We have resolved, Mrs. Holden, to do all that mortals can do, even to the sacrifice of life, if it be necessary."

"Bless you, bless you, young man! A mother's prayers will follow you."

"Deacon Holden," said Hancock, after a momentary hesitation, "the fate of your daughter is at this moment uncertain, and I am about to peril my life in her behalf. The chances are against me. This, then, is no time for concealments. I love your daughter, sir. The life of Ellen is more dear to me, if possible, than to yourself. My object in making this explanation is not to obtain your sanction, but solely to assure you of my zeal, and that nothing will be left untried to insure her safety."

"Restore her to us, Frederic, and Ellen is yours," said the deacon, pressing him cordially by the hand.

"Father, your blessing."

With a kindling eye Hancock had turned and bent before an aged man on the opposite of the room.

The old man placed his trembling hands on the youth's head, and, in tones of deep solemnity said:

"May God Almighty bless you, my son, and prosper you in your perilous undertaking."

As Frederic arose from his knee, a bustle was heard in the adjoining room, words of welcome were uttered, and presently the door opened, and the Scout stood in the entrance. He was received with joyful exclamations.

"Wal," he said, in his own rough way, after he had shaken hands with the principal settlers, "there's been purty doings here, I larn, arter all my cautions! Didnt I warn you agin the treacherous varmints. But let us hear all about the matter."

He was soon put in possession of the facts, and then Hancock informed him of their intended expedition.

"Good spunk, youngster; I like that! But let us consider—let us consider," added the Scout, rather sedately. "I tell yer now, this won't be child's play! The woods are swarming with the outlying reptyles, and we must proceed cautiously."

"Then you will assist in rescuing my children?" said Mrs. Holden, hurriedly.

"Sartin, ma'am, that will I! I've a grudge agin the varmints, and mean to pay them. Give yourself no consarn about the boy and gal, we'll bring them safe back to you, I reckon. Come, youngsters, let us see about your preparations," and, taking leave of those in the room, the party left.

On talking the matter over, the Scout was opposed to have any accompany him but Hancock, but changing his mind, he said:

"If the party belongs to the Ossipee tribe, as I consate, and we can tell by the dead Injun, I know where their camping ground is. Let us go down to the grove and look at the critter, arter that we'll decide what course to follow."

Leaving the block-house, the company proceeded to the grove. The Scout immediately sought the corpse of the savage. Turning the body over, and opening a portion of the dress, so as to expose the breast, the old man said:

"Here is his *totem*—'tis an Ossipee, as I consated," and he pointed to the figure of a tortoise imprinted on the breast of the corpse.

It was the custom among the various tribes, for the members of each tribe to wear on their person

"totem," or a badge, which denoted the tribe to which they belonged. Fish, birds and reptiles were the signs usually employed.

"Now, youngsters, this is my idea. You two," pointing to the companions of Hancock, "will take to the river as soon as the sun is gone down, and keep along as far as the Upper Falls. When you get there, draw your canoe close to the bank, under the bushes. Now, mind what I say, keep a still tongue in your heads. You've heard tell of a whisper among the mountains bringing down an avalanche—I tell yer, a whisper on the river, in such a still night as this, may bring down upon you something worse than an avalanche of wild cats! So be wary; move your paddles lightly; keep in the shadows as much as possible, and keep your eyes and ears open. I will join you at the Falls. Can you remember this?" and the Scout gave a cry so resembling that of the night-owl, that it would have deceived the most practiced ear.

"That will be a signal that I am in your neighborhood. Can any one of you answer it?"

Pearson made the attempt, and succeeded so well as to win the commendation of the Scout.

"Very well done, very well, indeed! You must answer my call—not right away, but in few minutes arter. You and I, youngster, will take to the woods and the sooner the better."

Cautioning the two young men anew not to start until the shadows fell on the river, and whistling his dog to his side, the old man and Hancock entered the woods. After proceeding some distance in silence, the Scout said, in a low voice:

"'Twas a good shot the youngster made—clean through the critter's skull; and yet it may prove a bad one for him. We must get him out of their hands to-night at all events."

"Shall we not rescue both?" asked Hancock, with much interest.

"That we'll determine on as the case may be; but the boy must be looked to first."

"But why George, and not Ellen?"

"Don't you see there's blood been spilt, youngster, and life for life is the varmint's creed, as though one of them haythens was worth as much as a Christian."

"I had no fears for his life," said Hancock.

"Why, you told me the youngster was wounded, did you not? Wal, now, does it stand to reason to think that the varmints would trouble themselves to carry him off, unless it was to wreak their vengeance on him."

"But why did they not kill him on the spot?" inquired Frederic.

"That wouldn't satisfy them bloody serpents. You've hearn tell of the stake, I s'pose, an' splinters of pitchwood, and sich devilish tortures? I've seen them. That's why they did not kill him on the spot, boy."

"And will they not subject Ellen to the same fate?" said Hancock, shuddering as the fearful thought shot across his mind.

"There's no danger of that. The infarnal scamps, though they delight in blood, love money better. No, youngster, they'll carry her to Canada, and sell her to the cursed French, who put them up to these things. They never kill women so long as they can find such a good market for them."

"Cheer up, lad," added the old hunter, after a pause, noticing the dejection of Hancock, "there's no telling but we'll get them both out of their clutches. My idee is, to make sure of the boy first—get him into the canoe, and start him down the river; and if we do this without disturbing the venomous snakes, we will attend to the gal's case. Hist! Brave smells mischief. What is it, pup?"

The dog, which was a little in advance, had suddenly stopped, pricked up his ears, and gave a low growl.

"What is it, pup?" again said the Scout, approaching him.

The animal tossed his nose in the air, snuffing eagerly for a moment. Then, as if satisfied, wagged his tail, and kept on his way.

"There, now, that dog," said the Scout, following him unhesitatingly, "knows more than any human being! He's been my companion for many a year and I have learnt his ways, and he mine, so that we understand each other perfectly. I will tell you some day, how he led the redskins off the track, when they thought they'd trapped me at one time. But it is getting dusky, and I must not forget the caution I gave the youngsters about keeping a still tongue."

After this the Scout proceeded in silence, throwing quick and searching glances in every direction. For miles he traveled in this manner, until darkness had completely fallen on the forest, through which he walked as if all its paths were familiar to him. By this time they had struck the banks of the river, and leaving the woods, they crept cautiously along the margin of the stream.

They were evidently approaching the neighborhood of the Indian camping-ground, for every movement of the Scout betrayed the utmost watchfulness. Time and again he turned and whispered to his companion:

"Tread softly, youngster! Don't speak for your life! A word might bring the whole pack on us!" and similar cautions. Occasionally he would stop short, and bending his ear to the ground, would listen eagerly for a few moments. After proceeding some distance, he halted beside a clump of tall bushes. Softly displacing their branches, so as to afford an entrance, he bade Frederic take his station in the thicket.

"Some of the outlying varmints may be skulking in the neighborhood, but you will be safe here," said the hunter, in a low voice. "I am going into the reptyle's nest to see how things are there. If I had that

dog's nose now it would be worth a dozen eyes! Be on your guard—do not move if you can avoid it. Come, Brave, lead the way!" and following the dog, the Scout disappeared in the gloom. Hancock heard not so much as the cracking of a twig to denote the presence of a living thing near, so cautious were the movements of the old hunter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CANINE SCOUT.

The Indians had selected for their camping-ground a spot in the bend of the river, where the forest, receding a short distance from the banks, formed a crescent-shaped clearing, which sloped gradually to the water's edge. On this spot some dozen or more lodges were scattered in the usually disorderly manner of an Indian encampment. The wigwams of the wandering tribes that yearly visit the writer's neighborhood, at the present day, are made of light canvas, or stout cotton cloth, and have a very neat, comfortable appearance, but those of which we are writing were rudely constructed of such material as the forest afforded. Some of them consisted of rough poles, or saplings, over which pine boughs were laid, but the covering of the most of them was of birch-bark, the same article that is used in the construction of their canoes, broad strips of which may be obtained from the birch tree.

In one of these wigwams, on the night in question, sat, or rather half-reclined, Ellen, on the skin of some wild animal, which, with some regard for her sex, her captors had furnished her. Her arms were confined behind her with twisted thongs, and her ankles bound by the same. Pinioned as she was, she could not long retain a recumbent posture with any sort of

comfort. A little hillock which arose in one corner of the lodge fortunately afforded her a comparatively easy leaning place.

Situated thus, the reader can better imagine than I can portray her feelings. She was a brave-hearted girl, and did not give way to any unnecessary weakness, but still she could not repress the half-sigh, half-moan that from time to time arose to her lips. What added to her distress was the knowledge she entertained of the terrible fate that awaited her brother. Of her own life she had not the least fear, for she knew that the greatest evil in store for her was a long journey through the wilderness, and perhaps years of servitude among the French Canadians; an escape from which, however, was frequently obtained by ransom or artifice. Her life, therefore, she felt was safe, unless her strength gave out on the journey, for it was not an uncommon occurrence, if a captive, by reason of sickness or any other inability, put the savages to much trouble or detained them for the inhuman wretches to despatch them at once, and take their scalps. In these days the French paid the savages a bounty for English scalps, as some States pay a bounty for the ears of a wolf or the head of a wild cat. This horrible traffic was not confined wholly to the French. Massachusetts, at that time, paid a similar bounty for Indian scalps, and it is well attested that many of the aborigines belonging to friendly tribes, even while doing good service for the whites, were shot down by lawless rangers of the woods, merely for the premium paid for scalps. Who could tell by the scalp whether it was taken from the head of a friend or a foe.

Ellen's greatest distress, we said, was on her brother's account. She knew that he had killed one of the tribe, and she had witnessed the ominous manner with which he was received at the encampment. She had seen the savages dancing around him with howls of vengeance, brandishing their tomahawks in fearful proximity to his head, while their eyes glared

with demoniacal fury. More dreadful than all, she had seen, in the early evening, from the door of her lodge, the fatal stake planted in the centre of the encampment, and heaps of dry brush brought from the adjoining woods and placed near it. This was hardly needed to confirm her fears, still a sight of the terrible preparations struck a sickening chill to her heart. How could his fate be averted? She revolved in her mind all possible contingencies, but not a gleam of hope could she find. The very blackness of darkness encompassed her. A cold despair settled on her heart. All her sympathies enlisted in behalf of her brother, she forgot her own sufferings. How would her heart have leaped for joy had she but known that even then friends were near at hand, ready to risk life in her and her brother's behalf! Her thoughts, it is true, often reverted to Hancock, and to his promise to rescue her, and she did not doubt but that he would make the attempt. But would he appear in time to save George from his impending fate? She strove to elicit a ray of hope from that thought; but when she reconsidered the matter—the improbability, nay, what she deemed the impossibility of tracing them in season, and bring a force sufficient to over-match the savages, convinced her at once that it would be sheer madness to build a hope on so frail a foundation.

"No, no," she murmured to herself, "he will come too late! George must die, and oh, God, such a death!" and a groan of anguish burst from her lips.

In another lodge, nearer to the river, bound hand and foot, so as to be almost incapable of motion, stretched on the cold sward, was George Hobbs. In his encounter with the savages, he had received a bad wound, which would have been exceedingly painful, had not his mental agony rendered him insensible to physical suffering. He saw that he had but a few hours to live—that the coming day would witness his death. Young, buoyant with life and hope,

death would, in any shape, have been terrible; but from that which awaited him he shrunk appalled. With a refinement of cruelty, his captors had pointed out to him with menacing gestures, the stake, which was to be the mode of his death, and had exhibited to him the sharp splinters with which they intended to pierce his body and add to his torture. He knew that there was not the slightest chance of escape from the fearful doom, and for hours, he remained in a sort of stupor of agony, with the fatal stake, the flaming splinters, and the burning pile continually before him.

At times, prayers burst from his lips—wild and incoherent, the ravings of despair—that death would come and save him from the fiery trial. And then would come thoughts of his home, and he would imagine himself with his parents, or sitting by the side of Annie, in the tower, relating to her a horrid dream—his present sufferings. Oh, it was terrible, terrible beyond description, when the delightful vision passed away, and his mind recurred to his real situation! Great drops of agony would force themselves from his brow, and bound as he was, he would writhe as one in a mortal struggle. After these momentary paroxysms would come calmer feelings, and he would strive to nerve himself to endure whatever might await him, with unshrinking courage.

We have exhibited the captive in some of his darkest moments, when his spirit was bowed in the depth of despair. It must not be inferred from this that he was a craven—that he lacked manliness. His situation was one calculated to test the fortitude of the stoutest heart. Bound, wounded, exhausted, in darkness and solitude, with the certainty of an excruciating death, within a few hours, pressing upon his mind—no wonder that he quailed—under like circumstances, whose heart would not have quailed? And yet, when the hour of trial arrived, George would probably have faced his foes without shrinking, and laughed at their cruelties. The anticipation of

suffering is often worse than the reality. The man who turns pale at the thought of submitting to a painful operation, frequently meets the surgeon's knife with a smile.

It was when he was in one of those calmer moods somewhere near midnight, his ear detected a slight movement at the entrance of his lodge. He listened eagerly, but for awhile all was silent, and George concluded that his ear must have deceived him. No—there is another movement. This time it is no deception. What could it be? An enemy coming to deal the secret death-blow. He remembered the ferocity of the brother of the man whom he had shot, when he was brought to the camp, and the difficulty with which the rest of the tribe prevented the savage from executing on him immediate vengeance. Could this be he, coming to glut his appetite for blood? George had besought death, but the idea of its near approach startled him, and he felt the cold sweat on his person. Whoever it was, he was in their power, incapable of resistance.

With all his senses on the alert, he again listened. The same movement continued, as if some one was forcing a secret entrance into the lodge. He heard the bushes rustle on the outside—the pine boughs cautiously put aside, and then a sound, as of some one making a passage through them. He remained perfectly still, expecting every moment the crushing blow of the tomahawk, or the sharp thrust of the scalping-knife. The intruder was approaching him—he heard him creeping slowly along—another moment, and he would be in reach of his body. A prayer arose to the young man's lips—a silent resignation of his soul to his Maker. Oh, what a sudden change of emotions—how did his heart throb, and what a thrill shot through his frame as his ear just caught an audible whisper:

“Boy! boy! where are you?”

"Here—God be praised! God be praised!" exclaimed George, every nerve quivering with joy.

"On your life be silent! Would you bring the whole pack on us?" was whispered, in the same cautious tones. Even as the words reached his ears, he felt the fastenings that bound him give way.

"Your arms, now," continued the unseen speaker, and immediately the thongs that had cut deeply into the flesh, were severed, and his limbs were free.

"God bless you for this, Scout!" said George, imitating the cautious tone of his deliverer,

"No time for thanks, now, youngster! Follow me, and move warily, the reptyles are easily aroused," and lying flat on the ground, the old man twisted himself with a snake-like motion, out of the lodge, and toward the woods.

With stiffened limbs, every movement of which caused intense pain, George followed his leader, until they arrived at a small clump of bushes on the edge of the forest, in front of which, as if standing sentinel, was the old man's hound.

"I must leave you here," said the Scout. "Brave will conduct you to the river, where I will meet you," thus saying, he glided silently into the forest.

As the hunter disappeared, the noble dog commenced moving slowly along, turning his head from time to time, as if to ascertain if he was duly followed. Finding that his wound would not permit of his walking, George crept along as he best could, dragging his maimed limb painfully after him. His progress was necessarily slow, and the admiration of George was excited at the sagacity displayed by his canine leader, who, as if aware of the difficulty under which his charge labored, timed his pace to George's slow movements. Leaving them on their way to the stream, let us return to the thicket, where we left Frederic.

The stars were shining bright overhead, but not a ray of light found its way into the thicket where Hancock was waiting, with no small degree of anxiety for

the Scout's return. He felt no fear, but there was a wild beating of his heart, which he could not control. He thought of Ellen in her loneliness and gloom. He pictured her sitting, bowed with grief, in her rude wigwam, and he yearned to make his presence known to her. He thought what a solace it would be did she but know that she had friends so near her. Barriel in these reveries, an hour or two passed imperceptibly away.

The distant cry of an night-owl broke his train of thoughts. The ill-omened sound, so consonant with the surrounding gloom, did not tend to dissipate the depression which weighed upon his spirits. It was not until he heard the cry repeated in another direction, that he remembered that it was the signal agreed upon between the Scout and those in the canoe. When this flashed upon his mind, the second struck him as anything but ill-omened. He now impatiently awaited the issue of events. Intently he listened to catch the returning footsteps of the Scout. Minute after minute passed away, but still no sound met his ear. Half an hour, perhaps, went by, when a movement among the bushes in which he was hidden sent a thrill to his heart.

"Wal, younster," said the hunter, in a subdued voice, thrusting his head into the opening he had made, "a'most tired of waiting, I s'pose. Howsam-ever I've seen the gal's brother. He was cruelly bound, and has got an ugly wound in his thigh. But I cut his thongs, and directed him how to proceed. The sly dog made the varmints think his wound was worse than it is, and so, fastening him with their cursed wooden twists, they thought they had him safe enough, and did not guard him so strictly as they otherwise would."

"And you will get him clear, Scout, to-night?"

"Speak softly, boy, you've no idea how sound travels in the night. If nothing happens we shall get him out of their clutches, and the gal, too, I consate.

But come with me, and don't forget you are walking among sleeping adders, which the least misstep may arouse."

Stepping out from his hiding-place, Frederic followed in the footsteps of the Scout. Occasionally the old fellow would give utterance to a low chuckle, as if indulging in some secret merriment. At last, turning his head toward his companion, he said:

"I declare that pup of mine knows as much as any human being!"

"Where is he, Scout?" asked Hancock, in the same cautious tone, "I do not see him."

"Guiding the boy down to the canoe, and as good a guide as I should be."

"How did you find where George was?" asked Hancock, with some interest.

"Wal, 'twas all of that pup's doings. 'Brave,' said I, 'lead me to the white boy!' With that he went snuffling along, until the knowing critter stopped, wagging his tail, before one of the lodges. You needn't tell me such dogs have no souls!"

In a few minutes they reached the stream. They had not been long there when Brave made his appearance, followed by George. Most thankful was he on arriving at the end of his journey, and hearty were the congratulations that passed between the young men. Lively, too, was the gratitude expressed to the Scout for his services.

"Reserve your thanks," said the old man, "until you get fairly out of the varmints' clutches. Remain here a while, and do not speak above your breath, while I go and find the canoe," and the Scout went a short distance up the stream.

Just below one of the falls on the river, hidden beneath the overhanging bushes on the banks of the stream, swung a canoe, in which two young men were seated.

"They're a long time coming," said one of them.

"it is an hour since we answered the old man's signal."

"We must not speak too loud, Baily, although the roar of the falls drowns our voices. Hark! what is that?"

There was a disturbance among the limbs overhead, followed by the well-known voice of the Scout:

"Drop your canoe down to the sloping bank, youngsters. Move warily."

Those in the canoe obeyed the directions, and but a few minutes elapsed ere George, with the assistance of Frederic and the Scout, was deposited in one end of the canoe.

"Now, boys," said the hunter, "all depends on you. You cannot be too cautious. I see the mist is rising on the river—keep in that as much as possible, and hug the banks when there is no vapor. The moon will be up soon, and some of the varmints may be up abroad. Keep your eyes and ears open, and your mouth shut, and before daybreak I trust you will be safe in the block-house."

"And tell your father, George," said Hancock, as the canoe floated into the stream, "that Ellen will follow you soon," and bidding good night to the voyagers, he and the Scout left the spot, followed by Brave.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CANOE CHASE.

The light bark shot rapidly and noiselessly down the stream. The mist was making fast, into the thickest of which the canoe was guided. For an hour or more they continued on their way, without meeting with anything to excite their alarm, and their hearts beat high in anticipation of the successful issue of the expedition. By this time the moon had arisen,

but although its light served to guide them on their voyage, they would gladly have dispensed with it, for they felt that the darkness was their best security. If the mist had continued unbroken the entire length of the river, they would not have heeded the moon's light, for the vapor hung like a veil around them, concealing them from view. But there were certain portions of the river—patches here and there—on which the moonbeams fell unobstructed. In crossing these the young men would be completely exposed. Still, by hugging the eastern bank, they could sometimes take advantage of the deep shadows of the overhanging trees and shrubbery, and so escape from observation, should prying eyes be in their neighborhood.

They were crossing one of these openings which occurred at a bend in the river where the point of land ran out so shallow that they were forced far into the stream, when the dip of paddles was heard, and almost in the same moment a canoe containing three savages shot out of the mist on the opposite side of the river, bound up the stream.

“Down, both of you!” whispered George—“they may pass without discovering us.”

The young men dropped silently into the bottom of the canoe, which floated slowly down with the current.

For two or three minutes those in the strange canoe took no notice of the apparently deserted bark, and the young men indulged the hope of escaping without discovery. It was soon put to flight, for ere long, a low, guttural “Ugh!” came across the stream, and in a moment the canoe of the savages was headed towards them. It did not approach them, however, as the Indians rested on their paddles, and appeared to be scrutinizing the little lone craft. With the utmost anxiety the young men watched their further movements. At last, one of the savages was seen to

dip his paddle in the water and gently propel the canoe.

"By heavens! they are slowly approaching us," said George. "Up, boys, and strike out for your lives!"

The young men sprang up, and plied their paddles with desperate energy. A loud whoop and yell from the savages rang over the water, and told that the chase had commenced.

"Plunge into the mist as soon as possible," said George, in an excited tone. "We have nearly a quarter of a mile start of them. This unfortunate wound of mine gives them the advantage, but we may succeed in eluding them."

In a few minutes the canoe containing the young men shot into the mist, and was lost to sight. With the rapidity of the swallow, skimming the surface of the stream, the pursuing bark dashed after it, the wily savages steering in a diagonal direction, so as to cut off the fugitives.

The young men were, however, as crafty as their pursuers, for as soon as they had got well into the mist, they, too, changed the direction of their prow, and made a straight wake for the opposite shore. Fortunately for the success of their manœuvre, a cloud at this moment passed before the moon, and the vapor being more than usually dense, served to shield their movements from observation.

"There they go," said George, in a whisper, as the quick strokes of paddles were heard crossing their black stern; "dip softly, but strongly; we may give them the slip. Would that I could aid you. I can pull a trigger, though, if I cannot handle a paddle," and he raised his rifle to a position for immediate use.

About a mile below this bend there was a fall or a series of falls. Perhaps the term "rapids" would be the most appropriate, as the descent of the current was gradual, the angle of descent being about twenty

degrees. The usual passage of those rapids was on the eastern banks of the river, where there was a comparatively smooth and easy canal, up which the canoes were usually dragged by those making the ascent of the river. There was still another passage about mid-channel, a difficult and somewhat dangerous one to those who were not intimately acquainted with its navigation. Only a descent could be made by this passage—an ascent would be impossible. For an eighth of a mile or more, the stream rushed in boiling whirlpools—seething and foaming over rocks—darting rapidly through narrow channels, and tossed about in the wildest tumult, threatening instant destruction to whatever should be drawn into the vortex, especially so frail a thing as a birchen canoe. Still, a dexterous hand could carry one safely through, and, fortunately for our party, George was well acquainted with all the intricacies of the rapids.

With this brief description, the reader will perceive the position in which the young men were placed. They were on the western side of the stream, where no channel existed, and, from the nature of the ground, where no transit below the rapids could be made by land.

For some time the young men remained stationary, listening eagerly to catch any signs indicating the presence of the foe, but all remained quiet.

“We had better have kept on,” said Baily, in a hushed voice, “and have ran down the western passage.”

“No,” replied Pearson, “we should have been overtaken long before we reached it; or if we had succeeded, they would have followed us through.”

“Well, I do not see as we are any better off cooped up in this way.”

“There is the central passage,” rejoined Pearson. “George can take us through it, if worst comes to the worst. The black imps will probably hover around

the other channel, hoping to nab us—if we could contrive to slip through the central passage we might steal a march on them. What say you, George?"

"It will be a difficult thing," replied George, "and being night, the risk will be greatly increased. But we may be forced to it, and in anticipation of such an event, you had better prop me up so that I can guide the canoe."

This was done, and after waiting some time longer without hearing anything of their pursuers, they commenced slowly crossing the river, throwing anxious glances about them in all directions. They had got about half way over when a slight breeze—what the sailors style a cat's-paw—suddenly dispersed the mist, leaving them fully exposed to view in a bright, broad patch of moonlight. To their consternation, there appeared, some dozen rods or so up the river, the other canoe, evidently on the lookout for them. Again the defiant war-whoop broke down the stillness of night, followed by a shout of triumph as the savages dashed in hot pursuit.

"There's no hope for us now, Pearson; push for the rapids!" shouted George, seizing a paddle to guide the frail craft.

It was but a minute ere they were in the swift current, where only the guiding paddle was needed. The savages were evidently familiar with the passage, for they did not hesitate to follow in the same course.

"Are they following us?" asked George, whose whole attention was absorbed in the management of the boat, which began to be tossed upon the troubled waters.

"By all that's good, they are! Close in our path," was the excited reply of Pearson.

"This will never do!" exclaimed George. "Take your rifles, boys, and give the belmsman his quietus. Steady, or you will capsize us! Hold one moment, however, until they get into the most dangerous navigation."

The young men had grasped their pieces, ready for instant action. The surges were breaking furiously around and under the frail vessel, while the thick white foam creamed over her sides, threatening to swamp her. At one moment she was borne forward with the speed of a race-horse—in the next she was tossed amid the raging billows like an egg-shell. Sometimes she was caught in an eddy and whirled nearly around, and then she would start forward with renewed velocity, running her sharp bows close upon the jagged rocks, which seemed to threaten her with instant destruction. It required the most watchful vigilance and dextrous management to avoid a collision. But young Holden was equal to the task. Cool, self-possessed, quick to perceive, and ready to ward off danger, he piloted his way in safety.

"Now, Pierson, now, Bailey," said he, "in a few moments we shall be where it is more quiet, while they will be in the most dangerous passages. Don't mind the others, but make sure of the one who steers. If the canoe is left for a moment without guidance it will prove fatal to them. Now, fellows, is your chance—take a good sight."

Each of the young men took deliberate aim. Almost a simultaneous discharge took place; there was a flash and a report, followed by an unearthly death-shriek, which rose upon the air high above the roar of the rapids. The shot of one of the young men took effect in the breast of the helmsman, who sprang wildly to his feet, staggered like a drunken man, and giving a fearfully agonizing cry, toppled over into the boiling water.

Left without any controlling power, the canoe was borne swiftly through a narrow channel, and dashed upon a point of sharp rocks, against and over which the mad waters beat in clouds of foam. In an instant the frail birchen vessel was shattered as if it had been made of paper, and the two savages were left struggling in the full strength of the rapids. At one mo-

ment they were hurled by the force of the current against the ragged ledges—the next whirled like drift-wood in the turbulent eddies; until, at last, their mangled bodies could be seen, now catching on some projecting rock, and now tightly jammed in some crevice, the angry waters roaring around and dashing over them, as if triumphing over their prey.

With an exulting shout, our adventurers kept on their way, and were soon gliding on the smooth surface of the stream once more. Nothing farther occurred to interrupt their passage, and just as day broke the canoe touched the bank of the river in front of the block-house.

Bailey started forward to notify the inmates of their arrival, while Pearson assisted George up the slope. Nearly every inmate of the fort had assembled at the gate, and warm and cordial was the welcome George received, and eager were the inquiries as to the particulars of his seizure and escape, and respecting the fate of Ellen. There was one form George did not see among the excited throng, and one voice which he missed in the chorus of welcomes that greeted him. Annie was absent. Did George feel hurt at this seeming indifference? Oh, no! He readily divined the cause. It was not until he was alone in his mother's room that he saw her. She then hastily entered the room, and rushing toward him, flung herself on his bosom, weeping convulsively.

“Dear George!”

“Dear Annie!”

There was a world of meaning in the tone and manner of utterance of those simple words, which expressed more than we could crowd into a volume.

CHAPTER IX.

BACKWOODS STRATEGY.

Leaving George in the care of Annie, who, the reader will not doubt, proved a tender and devoted nurse, let us look after Ellen, and those who were seeking her rescue.

"I never knew the varmints so unguarded before," said the Scout, as he left the banks of the river. "They thought the youngster was hurt worse than he proves to be, and they thought they had him sure enough. How it will ruck them when they find that their victim has escaped their infernal tortures!" and the old fellow chuckled over the disappointment that awaited them.

"But what do you propose to do for Ellen?" asked Hancock.

"Wal, I've been turning the matter over in my mind. I see the moon is about rising, and it will be risky business. I'm not sure but that it will be best to postpone the attempt to some other night."

"For heaven's sake do not think of it!" exclaimed Hancock, who shuddered at the idea that, on ascertaining the flight of George, they might wreak their vengeance on her.

"Softly, softly, youngster!" said the Scout—"your feelings are nat'ral," he continued, conjecturing the fears of his companion, "but I know the natur' of the redskins better than you. They will not touch a hair of her head. Howsomever, I will see what I can do. You wait here, and I will go and look around a little. Come, Brave, find me the white gal!" and giving a few directions to Frederic, he crept off in the direction of the encampment.

He had been absent but a few minutes when he

again made his appearance, and, in hurried tones, said:

"The imps are astir! The pack will open on us presently! Come this way, and let us watch the varmin's." So saying, he led off into the forest.

They had not proceeded far, when an infuriated yell burst upon the night air, as if a herd of demons had suddenly broke loose, and were venting their rage. A low laugh burst from the old man, as yell after yell rang through the forest.

"That's just like them critters," said he; "when they're riled, the only way they can spit out their spite is to set up an infernal howling, like a pack of wolves or wild cats."

Just then, momentary gleams of light flashed on their sight, as of torches borne hastily to and fro.

"Ha! ha! they'll find him, I consate. 'Twas a lucky circumstance that we got him off as we did. If the boys haven't been waylaid, he's safe out of their reach by this time."

"But will not this discovery operate against us?" asked Frederic, who saw in it a destruction of all hope of rescuing Ellen that night, at least.

"I'm not sartain about that," replied the Scout, "by what I've obsarved, all the party were not in camp—but working mischief somewhere, I s'pose. You will notice by the clustering of the lights they have diskivered something, probably the trail to the river."

"Well," said Hancock.

"Wal, it is reasonable to suppose, don't you see, that some on 'em will start in pursuit. That, in course, will leave so many the less to contend with."

"But will not those who remain keep a stricter watch," inquired Hancock.

"Undoubtedly, young man, although I reckon they do not suspect that any of the party that helped off George remains behind. At all events, we must hit upon some plan to draw off their attention from the

gal's lodge, then seize upon the moment to get her off. Let me consider a moment," and the old hunter appeared deeply buried in thought for awhile.

"Yes, that may do," he muttered to himself, "but it will be purty risky though." Then addressing his companion, he continued:

"I've thought it over, and my mind is this. There's a cluster of lodges near the river which are empty, excepting one, which contains their skins and stores. Now, if we contrive to fire one of these, the whole would soon be in a blaze. Nat'rally the reptyles would all rush to save their property; then would be our chance. But, boy, there's a great risk in it, and if we did not succeed, the gal's life might—I say, might be put in jeopardy. The malignant devils, while their blood was up, might brain her. Dare you attempt it?"

Hancock was silent for a moment. The consequence attending the failure pressed heavily upon his mind, and he knew not what to say.

"Dare you attempt it, youngster?" again asked the Scout.

Fearful of assuming a responsibility, pregnant as it was with the fate of one so dear to him, Frederic replied:

"I cannot decide, Scout. I leave the whole matter in your hands. You best know the risks we run, and the chances of success."

"Wal, then," replied the Scout, after a brief pause, gratified, it may be, with his companion's tribute to his superior sagacity, "I decide to follow the plan suggested. There is danger, I acknowledge, but there can't be many of them left, and if we are put to it, we can fight it out with the varmints. Should it come to that, they will not show a fair, stand-up fight, but skulk. Then, yer see, I can keep the tarnal imps at bay while you make off with the gal!"

"But there is your own risk, Scout?" said Hancock.

"That, young man, I don't much count on. I've lived through worse scrimmages than this is likely to be. I console the ball that reaches my life is not yet moulded. But what matters, if I do fall, a year or two off a lonely old man's life. I can't die before my time comes. There are so many grains of sand put in the glass of every man, youngster, and that sand must run out in its natural course. You can't hurry it—you can't check it. Man has his allotted time, and all the bloody redskins in the world can't cheat him out of a single second. If I am to fall this night, I am to fall. That's the doctrine we preach down to our Sabba'-day Pond meeting. So don't consarn yourself about me, my lad."

While the old man was thus unfolding his creed, they had been making a circuit of the woods, so as to obtain a position in rear of the encampment.

"Now," said the Scout, coming to a halt, "keep your station here, while I go and see if the snakes have crept into their holes. It is my idea that the young woman's lodge is the one nearest the woods. If so be it is, 'twill be all the better. Brave will smell it out for me. Come, pup!" and the old man and his dog moved off in the direction of the camp.

The young man, left alone in the forest, felt ill at ease. It was natural, now that the crisis of his adventure was approaching, that he should be somewhat excited. The emotions that agitated him were of an opposite character. Hope struggled with fear. The idea of speedily releasing Ellen from bondage thrilled him with joy. Then came thoughts of the difficulties to be encountered—of the fatal consequences should failure attend their attempt, shadowing his hopes and chilling his heart with fear. However, it was no time to falter now, and he nerved himself to the task before him.

In the course of half an hour the Scout rejoined him.

"The reptyles have crept into their dens," said he,

"but 'tain't likely they have gone to sleep. I've ascertained the lodge where your sweetheart is but I could not get near it for fear of discovery. Come this way, toward the edge of the forest; tread lightly, and I will point it out to you. The moon is getting up, which will be of some service, although for such a job as this darkness would be best."

The moon had not risen, however, above the tree-tops, and she afforded just light enough for Frederic to distinguish the situation of the lodges. The Scout pointed out the one which Ellen occupied, and the cluster of wigwams intended to be fired, and then said:

"Brave will remain with you in case of need—do you hear, pup?—while I go and kindle the flames. When they break out, and the varmints make a rush, then, youngster, cut through the tent, and rescue the gal. Keep your thoughts about you, boy, don't be rash; don't get excited! One can't be too cool on occasions like this."

"But where will you join me, Scout?" asked Hancock.

"That will depend on circumstances. I may have to show myself, so as to draw them off in pursuit. At any rate, you will plunge into the woods, keeping the moon over your right shoulder. Bear that in mind, boy, over your right shoulder. If I have to make a false trail, Brave will bring us together without doubt. Be wary, and when the flames burst out, then is your chance!" With these admonitions, the old man glided away.

Hancock stood in the deep gloom of the forest. A few rods in advance of him rose the lodge in which Ellen was confined. He had left his rifle leaning against a tree, and held in his hand a large hunting-knife, ready for instant use. The moment was one of thrilling interest, and he stood there, his gaze fixed upon the cluster of lodges, dimly discerned in the distance, waiting for the fiery signal, every nerve was

strung to its utmost tension. There was no quivering of the muscles—no trembling of the limbs. He was calm—almost preternaturally calm.

Beside him stood the faithful dog. At times the sagacious animal would gaze steadily at the lodge, then turning his head toward Hancock, he would wag his tail, as if to assure him that he was aware of all that was going on. At one time he gave a just audible growl, and with bristling hair crouched to the ground, as if in the act of springing. At that moment Frederic perceived the dusky form of a savage creeping in the neighborhood of Ellen's tent. He saw him but an instant, when he disappeared into one of the wigwams. The dog crept slowly forward, snuffing the air a while, then returned to the side of the young man, as if satisfied that the danger had passed by. It was very evident that the savage was prying around to see that all was quiet, and finding nothing to excite suspicion, had retired.

Hancock waited, anxious and impatient for the promised signal. He was beginning to wonder at the delay of the Scout, when a fierce yell arose in front of him, accompanied by a rush of feet. In the same moment, from the side of one of the group of lodges, he saw little tongues of flame leap forth, and in the next there was a slight explosion, which burst open the lodge, scattering the fire in all directions, while there arose from the curling and crackling bark a vast sea of flame that shot high in the air.

With a wildly beating heart Hancock sprang forward. It was but the work of a moment to cut a passage through the frail material of which the lodge was composed. As he forced his way through the opening he had made, a shriek of terror burst from Ellen's lips.

"Ellen, dear Ellen, be not alarmed! I am here to save you! Quick, follow me!" exclaimed Frederic.

"Frederic! O God! can it be you?" said the

trembling girl. "I am bound, dear Frederic, I can not move!"

Springing to her side, Hancock cut the withes from her feet and arms, and lifted her to her feet. One brief embrace followed, and then he bore her through the entrance he had made. The whole air was now illuminated with the blazing lodges, and throughout the encampment were heard the wild shrieks of the savages. As Hancock fled with his companion toward the forest, an athletic young Indian darted from behind the wigwam, brandishing the fearful tomahawk. Frederic was ignorant of his danger, and in another moment the fatal weapon would have been buried in his brain, had not a deliverer been at hand. The first intimation Hancock had of the presence of an enemy, was a sharp growl from Brave, and, hastily turning his head, he saw the powerful animal leap from the earth, and seize the savage by the throat. A second glance revealed the dog and the savage in a fierce struggle on the ground. He would have gone to the assistance of his canine friend, but he had a more momentous interest at stake, and without checking his speed, he pressed forward, and in a few moments had entered the woods.

Seizing his rifle, Frederic hurried his companion into the thickest of the woods, plunging deeper and deeper into their mazes, until the light from the burning camp was lost to sight. Selecting a spot where a dense cluster of bushes surrounded a small mound, he entered into the covert, and made a brief halt, to enable his affrighted companion to recover herself.

"Oh, do not wait, Frederic!" said the panting girl. "I can keep on still further—they will pursue us!"

"We will stop but a moment, Ellen, for you to recover breath. They will not follow us at present, I think. Their attention will be wholly taken up with their burning wigwams. Thank God, we have succeeded so well as we have."

"Yes, yes, we do, indeed, owe him our thanks! But, oh! Frederic, what will become of poor George—they will surely murder him!"

"He's safe, dear girl, safe out of their hands!" said Hancock, and in a hasty manner he informed her of his rescue, and explained to her the means they had taken to effect her escape.

"How much do I owe you!" said Ellen, in tones of gratitude. "How much more than I shall ever be able to pay you!"

"I think I have something in my possession which will cancel the debt," said Hancock, and he slightly pressed the hand within his clasp.

At that moment a rustling among the bushes was heard, as if some one was forcing an entrance. Leveling his rifle, the young man prepared to receive the intruder. A low, joyful bark caused him to lower his weapon.

"It is the noble Brave," said he to Ellen, who sat shaking with fear; in the next instant the faithful animal burst into the inclosure, and seeking the side of Ellen, placed his head in her lap, and seemed to testify by mute signs his joy at her escape. Both Hancock and Ellen caressed the noble animal, to whose services they probably owed their lives, and rejoiced heartily at his escape from the savage.

In that struggle, however, Brave had not run much risk. When he sprang upon the savage, he seized him in his huge jaws by the throat, and brought him at once to the ground. The Indian was entirely powerless, and in a very short time was completely throttled. Not until his victim ceased to struggle did the dog quit his hold, and being satisfied of his death, he shook himself, and bounded into the woods, running to and fro until he caught the scent of the fugitives, after which he darted rapidly on their track.

CHAPTER X.

WOODCRAFT.

"I feel quite rested now, had we not better go on, Frederic?" said Ellen, after sitting awhile—"I fear every moment that we shall be followed."

"It is a dangerous neighborhood, and the sooner we leave it the better," replied Frederic; "and Brave seems to be of the same opinion. See, he stands ready to lead the way."

Carefully making their way out of the thicket, Frederic looked around to ascertain the bearings of the moon, glimpses of which could be caught through the trees, and following the directions of the old hunter, the party started on their way. They had not proceeded many rods when they heard the report of a gun in the direction whence they had come, followed shortly afterwards by another.

"The Scout is engaged with the Indians," said Frederic. "Pray Heaven that no harm befall him! Without his aid, I know not how we shall get along."

When the report of the gun was heard, Brave gave evident signs of uneasiness, turning his head repeatedly, with low whines.

"He knows that his master is in danger," said Ellen, "and evidently wishes to go to him."

"Yes, and it will, perhaps, be best that he should," rejoined Frederic. "Go, Brave, and seek your master!"

The dog gave one joyful leap into the air, and then started at the top of his speed for the Indian encampment.

As the young couple, doubtless, will not object to being left alone, we propose to leave them, making

the best of their way, while we go back and glare at the proceedings of the Scout.

When he left Frederic, in order to fire the wigwams, he skirted the forest until he arrived near the river. To accomplish the object he had in view required all his cunning and watchfulness, for every movement he made might betray him, and every step was encompassed with danger. Well versed in all the tricks of the savages, the old man proceeded carefully to execute his mission.

Leaving his gun in the edge of the woods, he crept stealthily toward the cluster of vacant lodges, which so closely adjoined each other that in many cases they came in contact. Selecting the central one of the group, he soon effected an entrance. He had taken with him a quantity of dry kindling stuff, which he placed against the side of the tent, and striking a fire with a flint and steel, which he always bore about him—locofoco matches were then an unknown luxury—he succeeded after a while in setting the pile in a blaze, the flames of which soon seized upon the inflammable material of which the tent was composed. Leaving a small pile of powder in the centre of the lodge, he took his departure, closing every aperture whence the light from the fire could issue. He then hastily retraced his steps; but before he reached the woods the yell of the savages reached his ear, and starting from his stooping position, he dashed to the spot where he had left his gun, and reached his covert without being discovered.

Hovering in the neighborhood of the camp, the old man witnessed, with unalloyed pleasure, the success of his measures; and a grim smile lighted up his face when he saw the effects of the explosion, scattering the flaming bark on the other lodges, and instantly igniting them. Presently his ear was startled with a howl still more unearthly than any that had preceded it. Immediately there was a clustering of the band in the vicinity of Ellen's lodge, and, to the Scout's aston-

ishment, he saw them raise from the ground and bring into the light the corpse of an Indian. Could the young man have struck him down, was his first query. But as they placed the body on a mat, by the glaring light he could see the mangled throat, and he knew in a moment the author of the deed.

Immediately after thus disposing of the dead, the savages gathered in the rear of the lodges, seemingly in consultation. It was soon apparent that they had discovered the trail of the fugitives, and four of them started forward to follow it. The Scout was determined to prevent this, even at the risk of his own life. Stepping boldly out into the clearing, he leveled his piece and drew the trigger. Was he ever known to miss a shot? The foremost savage sprang into the air and then fell headlong to the earth. During the confusion that ensued, the old man deliberately reloaded his rifle, and then started off in a direction contrary to that taken by Frederic. With a yell of rage, the three savages rushed after him, one of whom discharged his gun at him, but without effect, although the ball split a young tree by his side.

"A good shot," said the old man to himself, "a capital shot, if aimed at the sapling! But you can't expect much from such a breed."

The Scout led the chase some distance in the woods, when coming to a large fallen tree, he dropped suddenly to the ground and crept under the trunk, where the foliage shielded him from observation. In a few minutes his pursuers came to the spot, and two of them passed on and were soon lost to sight, but the third Indian sat down on the fallen tree. The Scout could plainly hear his heavy breathing, as if exhausted by the pursuit. It was a critical moment for him. The least movement on his part would betray his hiding-place; still he cautiously felt for his hunting-knife, to have it ready in case of discovery. In drawing it from the sheath he accidentally rustled the leaves. The noise at once caught the ear of the

Indian, who sprang to his feet and threw suspicious glances toward the fallen trunk. The Scout had no fears of coping with the Indian single-handed, but he knew the whoop he would raise on discovering him would bring back the party who had gone on. He therefore kept quiet, and fortunately for him, as the savage made a cautious step toward the tree, a partridge, or some other bird, probably frightened from its nest, broke from among the branches and took refuge in some underbrush.

The sight of the bird at once allayed the suspicions of the savage, and after a brief halt he started in the track of his companions. Waiting until the woods concealed him from view, the Scout crept softly from beneath the tree, and with a light step, returned to the clearing. Just before he reached it, he heard a quick movement behind him. In an instant he sprang behind a tree, and cocked his rifle. He might conceal himself from animation, but the noble Brave was not to be thrown off the track. With the most lively demonstrations of joy, the faithful animal rushed toward and leaped upon him.

"Ha, pup! you come in good time," said the Scout, patting him heartily. "We've started them on a false scent, Brave, and you must put me on the right one!" and he followed the edge of the forest until he arrived in the rear of the encampment.

The embers of the burnt lodges still emitted a lurid light, and a heavy smoke hung around the spot. Occasionally the cinders would flame up, throwing a momentary gleam on surrounding objects, then die away, and leave them in tenfold gloom. A smile played over the face of the Scout.

"The whelps have had their bonfire," he muttered to himself, "but 'tain't such a one as they calkerlated on I reckon? If 'twan't for the boy and gal now, I'd wait here jest to enjoy the rage of the sarpynts who have gone down the river, when they come back and find what's been done."

The old fellow's desire was gratified, for as he turned to leave, he heard the dash of paddles, and presently two canoes shot into the cove, from which some eight or ten savages leaped to the shore. They were met on landing by two or three squaws, when there ensued on both sides a noisy jabbering, and violent gesticulations. When the new comers became fully aware of what had transpired, their demonstrations of rage were beyond description. Howl after howl, yell mingling with yell, a chorus of demoniacal wrath rang through the forest. In the frenzy of their rage some of them leaped about like madmen—twisting their faces in the most diabolical contortions—gnashing their teeth, and swinging their tomahawks wildly in the air.

"Come, pup, let's be off," said the hunter; "that howl is something worth hearing and seeing. To call them critters human beings! Why a pack of cater-mounds wouldn't cut up such awful didos!" With these remarks the old fellow followed the dog, whose ready nose had caught the scent. Frederick continued with his companion on their difficult journey. He followed as well as he could the direction of the Scout, keeping the moon over his right shoulder. Had he not paid attention to this, he would probably have made but little progress. There is no place where one can be so easily lost as in the forest, and in the night time, without some marks to guide you, you cannot take twenty paces without being completely confused as to the right direction to be followed.

As our young couple journeyed on, their conversation was naturally directed to the exciting incidents connected with the circumstances by which they were surrounded. But gradually the topic changed, until at last Frederic found himself whispering in the ears of the blushing maiden that tale which the poet tells us should be told by the moonlight alone!

It was a very pleasant mode of whiling away the tedium of their night tramp, and from our heart we

cannot blame the young man. He was without doubt prompted to it by the desire to make his companion forget the dangers and difficulties which surrounded them. And most admirably did he succeed. We doubt if a savage had started up at their very elbows they would have bestowed more than a careless glance upon him. They were wandering along in that happy reverie, in which young lovers, it is said, are wont to indulge, when Frederic was startled by feeling a hand pressing on his left shoulder.

"Ha, youngster," said the well-known voice of the Scout, to Frederic's great relief, "is this your right shoulder? The moon up yonder seems to be peeping over it, at any rate! Wal, wal, 'tain't strange, when one's head and heart get turned, that the body should turn with them! It's risky business, Miss, for young folks like you to be abroad in a forest at night; they're mighty apt to miss their trail!" and the old man seemed to relish his joke hugely.

"But the night is fast waning, and we have a long tramp yet before us," continued the Scout; "it's lucky the Injuns haven't their dogs with them to follow up our trail. I make no doubt, as soon as there is light sufficient, they will be upon our path. The party that went down the river have returned without the boy. When they found their lodges were burnt, they were awfully riled. I hope, Miss, you will be able to keep on a piece further."

Ellen assured him that she felt perfectly able to proceed, and striking into an Indian file, the Scout taking the lead, the party went rapidly on their way. The utmost caution was exercised by the Scout to prevent marks being left by which their route could be traced. This, however, was a difficult matter; yet he resorted to different artifices to perplex their

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

The interest of the inmates of the block-house, after the return of George, was wholly concentrated on Ellen, and those seeking to rescue her. The fears of the parents of Ellen had in a great measure subsided, for they did not doubt that her deliverance would be effected. All eyes were bent on the woods, in expectation of the appearance of the party. But as the sun arose, and hour after hour went by without any signs of the absent ones, new apprehensions began to fill all minds. The message sent by Frederic through George, that Ellen would not be long behind him, had greatly excited the hopes of her parents, and they had confidently expected her before the breakfast hour. Slowly the time passed on until near noon, and with every passing hour the anxiety in the fort increased. Some two or three had taken their station in the tower, watching and listening eagerly, when at about twelve o'clock a faint report of a gun was heard afar off in the forest, followed by two or three others. The party were evidently in the vicinity, and had been followed and attacked by the savages. Six young men immediately volunteered their services to go to their assistance, and, headed by Pearson, they started at a rapid pace in the direction whence the sounds came. As they hurried through the woods repeated shots told them that the party were hotly engaged, and guided their steps to the scene of action.

Their arrival was most opportune. They found the Scout and Frederic engaged in a regular tree-fight. The fugitives had been forced to take a devious route in order to blind pursuit. They had fortunately ar-

rived within hearing of the block-house before the Indians came up with them. Finding that they would be overtaken, they had made a stand in a heavy growth of timber, where they found a windrow of trees, caused by one of those furious tornadoes, which often pass through a forest like some huge monster, tearing down the largest trees in its path. This windrow served admirably as a barricade, behind which the Scout and Frederic threw themselves, and held the foe at bay. They trusted that the report of their guns would be heard at the fort, and bring a party to their aid.

The savages, some eight in number, took advantage of the trees, skulking from one to another, as opportunity offered, gradually drawing nearer to the fallen timber, over which they evidently intended to make a rush, after drawing the fire of the little party.

"We must reserve our shots," said the Scout, calmly, taking a piece of dried meat from his pouch and eating it, "the whelps are mighty tricky. Now, here's a trick of theirs when they want the powder of their foe," so saying, the old man raised his cap, by means of a stick, a few inches above the logs, moving it slowly. No sooner was it up than there followed a report, and a ball went humming through it.

"There, you see, youngster, is so much powder burnt for nothing!" said the Scout, coolly, replacing his cap on his head, "therefore don't fire at the imp unless you are sure of them."

A shout of triumph followed the shot which the hunter had drawn from them, and three or four savages darted forward from their covers. As quick as thought Frederic covered his man, and the flame leaped from his rifle. One of the party was brought mortally wounded to the ground.

"Well done, lad!" said the Scout, "they will learn a lesson from that, that a white has as much cunning as a redskin!"

The late exultant shout gave place to a yell of rage,

As the savages saw one of their number bite the dust, and found that a trick had been played upon them. It was a habit with the red men whenever one of their number fell to proclaim their loss by wild cries and howls. How different from the white man, who stands a silent witness of battalion after battalion mowed down, as at Waterloo, the cry of the wounded and the groan of the dying only filling the air!

After the cries that attended the fall of the Indian, an ominous silence prevailed among the band. Not a sound was heard for some time, not a movement seen to indicate their presence. It was a boding stillness, and the Scout felt it to be so.

"I don't like this," he said, after waiting some minutes. "I mistrust the varmints are planning some new mischief. Keep a sharp lookout, boy; there's no counting on the whelps!"

A moment afterward the party was startled by a cry from Ellen, who had been concealed in a grassy hollow, out of the reach of any chance shot.

"Frederic—Frederic! Look yonder—there to the right—they are creeping over the timber!"

It was too true. Four of the savages had stolen off unperceived, and scaled the fallen trees, thus outflanking the little party. Their case now appeared desperate, and Hancock looked inquiringly into the Scout's face. There was a ferocious fire gleaming in the old man's eye, and an expression of bold determination stamped upon his features.

"There's no help for it, boy," he said, between his shut teeth. "We must each take to a tree, and sell our lives as dearly as possible. I wouldn't mind it so much if the gal was out of harm's way. Lie low, Miss, so that the shots shan't hit you!"

Ellen crouched tremblingly to the earth, while the old man and Frederic sprang to a cover. They could see the Indians gliding stealthily from tree to tree, but they did not dare to venture a shot until they were sure of doing execution. So cautious were the move-

ments of the enemy, they left no portion of their bodies exposed, save when they glided around a tree, and then only for an instant. Both parties were on the alert. It was the evident intention of the savages to get as near the whites as possible—to draw their fire and then rush upon them. The situation of our little party was precarious in the extreme. There was the foe who had turned their flank to be guarded against, then there was the other division of the savages, who might attempt the barricade, or assail them on the left flank, whose movements required watching. If a simultaneous attack had been made upon them their case had been hopeless. Something like this had, no doubt, been concerted, and while the Scout's whole attention was occupied with those on the right, Hancock's was engaged on the other threatened points.

"If we can bring down two of the varmints," said the Scout, "there may be a chance for us," for he well knew that the savages frequently retired from the combat on losing one or two of their party, however great the odds were in their favor.

With an eagle eye, the old man watched his opportunity, and at last discharged his piece at the partly-exposed body of one of the foe. A cry of pain told that his shot had taken effect, although it was not probably a mortal wound, as the savage did not fall. At the same moment Hancock fired, with better success, at one of the Indians he had detected crawling over the fallen timber. No sooner were their pieces discharged than a rush was made by the savages on the right with brandished tomahawks. There was no time to reload, and the Scout and Frederic desperately clubbed their rifles, determined to defend themselves to the last, while Brave stood in a springing attitude, showing a formidable row of teeth.

So absorbed had been the parties in each other's movements, they had not observed the coming of the young men who were cautiously approaching through

the woods. The first intimation they had of their presence was a ringing volley poured in upon the charging savages, accompanied by a loud shout, as they rushed into view of the astonished and delighted Scout and his companion.

That volley was well directed, for three out of four of the savages fell headlong to the earth in the struggles of death, the tomahawk of one of them flying through the air and burying itself in the very tree behind which Frederic had concealed himself. The fourth, who had been wounded by the Scout, turned to flee, but Brave was at his heels, and leaping upon him, brought him to the ground, where he was soon despatched by one of the party.

"To cover, youngsters, to cover!" shouted the Scout, springing to the barricade and reloading his rifle, the example being followed by the rest of the party.

But the danger was passed. The few remaining savages, seeing the fall of their companions, had hastily retreated. After satisfying themselves of their victory, loud and hearty were the congratulations that passed between the young men, in which Ellen, though pallid and shaking with fright, as heartily joined. While the rest made preparations to leave the spot, the Scout busied himself in securing the spoils, viz: the arms and the scalps of the fallen. This accomplished, with joyful steps the company started for the block-house.

Before they arrived within sight of it, three shots, fired in rapid succession, notified the inmates of their approach, to which the swivel of the tower gave a booming response. As they advanced into the settlement, half way down the slope from the block-house, Annie Wilson came flying, rather than running, and with wild exclamations of joy, threw herself into the arms of her cousin. Mr. Holden and his wife stood a little distance outside of the palisades, waiting to receive their daughter, while clustered within the gate

were the excited inmates, drawn a little apart, that the meeting between the parents might be free from the observation of what might be considered idle curiosity, although in this case the hearts of all throbbed in sympathy with the parents.

As the party drew near, with a face glowing with mingled emotions, Frederic stepped out from the group of young men, leading Ellen by the hand. He conducted her to her father, who stood with outstretched arms ready to receive her. Not a word was uttered as they met, but folding her in a silent embrace, he pressed her to his heart, then raising his hands devoutly, he said in a voice trembling with the depth of feeling:

"Father of Mercies! we thank Thee for this! My child was dead, and is alive again; she was lost, and is found!"

Choking back her tears—tears springing from a heart surcharged with happiness—Ellen left her father's to be received into her mother's embrace. The hearts of all who witnessed that affecting meeting throbbed in unison, and their glistening eyes betrayed the interest they took in it. But why attempt to describe the scene! It was one we love to linger over, but words are too poor adequately to portray it.

The reception given Frederic and the Scout, you may be sure, was neither cold nor indifferent, in which Brave came in for a share. Such grasping of hands, such hearty congratulations, one does not witness every day.

The next morning, as the Scout was about taking leave, Ellen went up to him, placed her hand in his, renewedly thanked him for his services, and adding:

"How shall I repay the debt I owe you, Scout?"

"That depends on circumstances, Miss," replied the old man, gazing on the plump hand within his broad palm, and fondling it as he would a young bird—"have you squared accounts with the boy yet?"

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"He says he is satisfied," replied Ellen, with a glowing face, casting a bright glance towards Frederic.

"Aha! I see how it is, the rogue has forestalled me," rejoined the Scout. "Wal, then, I s'pose I must be content with an invitation to the wedding, which in course will come off one of these days. God bless you, Miss. The lad is worthy of you, and may you both be happy! Come, pup," and followed by the dog, he left the block-house, and soon struck into the woods.

The main interest of our story is over. And yet there is one more incident connected with it, which, if we should omit to notice, we should hardly expect to be pardoned.

Disheartened by their losses, the Indians did not make their appearance again, although the settlers thought it prudent to remain through the winter in the block-house. In the spring they returned to their deserted homes, and one fine, autumnal morning there was quite a gathering at Deacon Holden's—the ladies all in their gala dresses. A double wedding was to take place, and prominent among those who witnessed the interesting ceremony stood our old friend, the Scout, with the noble Brave by his side.

"One year ago, this night, youngsters," said the old man, shaking the happy couples heartily by the hand, "we little thought of these doings!"

A furtive glance was exchanged between Frederic and his blushing bride, as their thoughts reverted to their night journey in the forest, when she first heard that tale which—

"Must be told by the moonlight alone!"

THE END.

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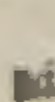
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